

Press Conference
By
World Meetei Council (WMC)
at Press Club of India, 29th Feb 2024, New Delhi
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1. Key points of SoO agreement with Kuki militants group

- Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreements between Army and constituents of United Peoples Front (UPF) and Kuki National Organisation (KNO) have been in force since 1st Aug 2005.
- Tripartite agreement involving Govt. of India, Govt. of Manipur and the Kuki Outfit groups formalise these SoO with effect from 22nd Aug 2008.
- However, the points mentioned in the SoO agreements have never been honoured by the Kuki outfits, and the Govt. is mute spectator of it.
- The SoO agreements with UPF and KNO is extended till **29th Feb 2024 i.e., TODAY.**
- There are strong evidences exist where the said Kuki militant groups have violated the points rendered in the SoO agreements.

WMC wants to ask the Govt. of India about the role of mute spectator in the case of Kuki militants violating SoO agreement norms

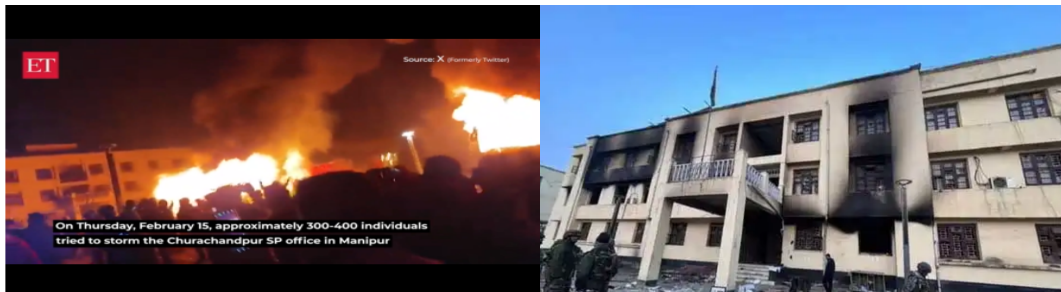
2. Evidences of violating the SoO norms by Kuki militants group

- Participant in the peace rally by Kuki people on 3rd May 2023, the 1st day of the violence at Churachandpur.
- How did this sophisticated AK-56 rifle come from when SoO norms said the outfit members will be in their designated camp and arms and ammunitions are in army custody?



- The photos of burning down/ attacking of SP & DC office and burning at Churachandpur dated 15th & 16th February 2024
ET Link: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/hundreds-of-mob-attempted-to-storm-churachandpur-sp-office-in-manipur/articleshow/107731164.cms?from=mdr>

Link: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/imphal/manipur-violence-mob-storms-dc-sp-offices-in-churachandpur-internet-suspended-for-5-days/articleshow/107740804.cms>
<https://nagalandpost.com/index.php/2024/02/17/dc-office-torched-in-churachandpur-2-killed/>



3. Misinformation in the media house on the HC orders on ST status to Meetei in Manipur

- The recent order of removal of Paragraph 17(iii), which had instructed the Manipur Govt. to consider the inclusion of Meeteis in the list of ST.
- This modification in the original order of March 27, 2003 does not change the effect of the order.
- Govt. Manipur is still obliged to send the required reports for the inclusion of Meetei in ST status within the month of April 2024.

WMC urges Govt. of Manipur to send the two reports i.e., ethnography report and latest socio-economic status of Meetei to the Ministry of Tribal affairs immediately. This is a matter of survival of Meetei in Manipur.

4. Blockade of National Highway in Manipur

- The National Highway viz., NH-2 and NH-37 have been frequently blocked by the Kuki groups since the violence erupted.
- In NH-2, the Kangpokpi area which is mere 10Km stretch which is a Kuki habitant area needs to be guarded by security forces for smooth transition.
- Similarly, in NH-37 which is Jiribam to Imphal route, another few stretch where Kuki villages passed through have become an issue area.
- The Govt. is unable to resolve this issue and it is impacting the supply-chain of logistics.
- WMC have already raised this concern to the Chairman of National Human Rights Commission during the meeting held on 17th Nov`23 at Guwahati
- NHRC have instructed the Govt. of Manipur for immediate resolution of this issue but the situation remain same till today.

The National Highway blockade is a gross violation of basic human rights, it should be considered as a crime. The responsible Kuki organizations who are indulged should be punished.

5. Some key points which are opposed by Kuki

- In the beginning of February 2024, Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah announced that the government has decided to construct a fence along the 1,643 Km border with Myanmar. Out of this stretch, 390 Km is passed through Manipur state.
 - *The Kuki organizations have raised objections on this decision of the Govt.*
- The initial proposal of NRC cut-off year was 1951 during UPA regime, but eventually there was a violence broke out in Churachandpur opposing the cut-off year. Later, the Govt. of Manipur had changed the cut-off year into 1961.
 - *This is because the Kuki groups are in fear that the Lacs of illegal immigrants will be deported back to Myanmar.*
- Kuki groups also have opposed to the MHA`s decision on scrapping the Free Movement Regime (FMR) both side of Indo-Myanmar border of 16Km. The FMR area of 16Km in both sides can be entered without any Visa.

The above points establish the fact that the Kuki are migrant community and they want to wipe out the INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FROM THE LAND OF MANIPUR!!!

6. Demands of World Meetei Council (WMC)

- To bring normalcy in Manipur, the Govt. of India must contain, control and disarm the Chin-Kuki militants. We still have not seen the effectiveness of the commitment given by the Hon`ble Union Home Minister during his last visit in Manipur.
- Justice should precede Peace. Unless Justice is done to Meetei, there will be no durable peace in Manipur.
- The NRC solution and Land-law modifications are NOT the proper solutions to save Meetei.
- The constitutional protection - ST status to Meetei is inevitable and Meetei can`t fall prey anymore in the changing dynamics of the geo-politics in the region.

Letter to Opposition Leader of Manipur:-



Meetei Yaipha Lup (Europe)



Ref. No: WMC-MYL-GMF/2024/02

Date: 29/Feb/2024

Subject: The Way Forward – request

Dear Members of the Opposition

Manipur Legislative Assembly,

We, the members of the Meetei diaspora, residing in India as well as other countries of the world, are writing to express our deep concern at your inability to effectively address and question the incumbent government's inactions to control the on-going violence and prevent the destruction of the social and democratic fabric of the state since violence broke out on 3rd May 2023.

We expect the opposition parties to play a vital role in ensuring accountability within governing bodies and governments, and to contribute towards the effective implementation of the measures taken by the government for the safety and security of its public. The opposition also has the duty to guarantee the apparatus of Article 21 of the Indian constitution to the citizens of India living in Manipur.

We expect the opposition parties to provide constructive criticism to the government, putting restrictions on the arbitrariness of the ruling party, questioning safety, security, liberty and the rights of people as a top priority. You are expected to scrutinise government decisions, policies, and actions, and defend our public interests in Manipur.

However, we note you have failed to play your role on account of the following reasons:

1. We have not seen the opposition parties put in front of the public a **credible alternative solution** to the one provided, or the lack thereof, by the majority in power, to make the government accountable. The state has been plagued with violence and escalations since the 3rd of May, 2023 and there has not been any program for constructive action taken from your side to help bring back normalcy to the state. There are no publicly available statements from the oppositions that chart out a path to normalcy in the state.
2. The opposition party has failed to contribute to **promote and defend human rights and fundamental freedom** for the people living in Manipur. We have not heard a collective voice from the opposition party when the freedom of speech, right to life and personal liberty of the citizens of Manipur were severely violated. In our eyes, we see you as mute spectators during the whole event except for some of your sporadic press conferences and submission of memorandum to the high-level government offices.
3. Those in the INC have not demonstrated visible efforts to **persuade your party's central leadership to advocate for Manipur**. Instead, there have been instances where your central leadership made unverifiable statements that have the potential to harm Manipur. Addressing this situation is crucial to ensure effective representation and safeguarding the interests of Manipur at the national level.
4. Your party has not presented a firm position on critical issues such as **illegal immigration, poppy cultivation, arms proliferation and militarization** of the civilian population, **Free Movement Regime (FMR)**, **Scheduled Tribe** status for Meeteis to name a few. Your party must **articulate clear stances on these matters**, as they hold significant implications for Manipur and would contribute



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towards fostering public trust and ensuring that your party's advocacy **aligns with the priorities and aspirations of the people of Manipur.**

5. Given your position as the members of the opposition, this was a key catalyst for you to **play a crucial role in bridging the gap between the two communities in conflict.** Unfortunately, there hasn't been any visible action seen during this crucial time. Actively engaging in initiatives aimed at fostering understanding and reconciliation between the communities could significantly contribute to bringing a resolution to the current conflict.

6. To the members of the INC, your party was at the helm of power, both at the centre as well as in the state (Manipur) in 2005, when the Indian Army and Central Paramilitary forces signed the SoO (Suspension of Operation) agreement with armed Zomi and Kuki organisations in Manipur. The ongoing violence has its traceable roots from that agreement giving leeway to these armed groups who have spread a reign of terror in the state for the last 9 months, yet your **party both at the centre and at the state is not publicly sharing your stance on the abrogation** of such a highly detrimental agreement to the integrity of the state. One of the serious consequences of this agreement was the social engineering of the demographic in Moreh by illegal Kuki infiltrators, which culminated in the violence on 3 May 2023 where Meiteis have been ethnically cleansed from Moreh (driven away, their houses burned, razed and flattened to the ground as well as commercial properties).

7. **Citizens of Manipur have become refugees in their own land.** There is no adequate relief in the relief camps provided to the internally displaced people in Manipur. Various sources have said that the central government has sanctioned more than INR 500 crore to help the IDPs with their living conditions. However, the ground reality is very different. The public wants to know what the opposition is doing to make the government accountable for every penny sanctioned by the centre.

8. The opposition leadership's efforts at the centre are quite appalling as we see **no significant steps being taken by them to persuade the central government leadership to bring an end to this bloodshed in the state and restore normalcy** at the earliest. Instead, P Chidambaram one of the INC's prominent leaders quoted, with a reference to a particular community, that there was ethnic cleansing in the Imphal Valley of Manipur. When Meiteis were driven out of Moreh, we did not hear a single word of condemnation from him. Does the INC at the centre support only certain ethnicities?

9. We question - why the opposition has not made efforts to rectify when Rahul Gandhi made quite an obvious ignorance of the sentiments of the general public in Manipur during his 'Bharat Jodo Nyaay Yatra' in Manipur, where miscreants chanted "Welcome to Kukiland". As a party leader, we would have expected him to show his statesmanship by convincing the public at large and the specific communities in particular, that **a progressive society has no room for violence and that a viable option for dialogue should be initiated** at the earliest.

10. We question the **short-sighted policy and implementation of the creation of Kangpokpi district** during the INC government's tenure. How was this done without rigorous assessment and consequences of such a carve out? The valley districts are surrounded by camps of Kuki militants that are now proving to be quite a strategic location and circumstance to carry out attacks against Meiteis in all forms (chokehold viz. attacks on farms, farmers, water supply, civilians, stock animals and road infrastructure). The carve out of this shortsighted district has also cut off connections to other non-Kuki dominated districts with the valley districts. We see clearly the consequences of this policy in this 9-months long violence.



Meetei Yaipha Lup (Europe)



The people of Manipur entrust the Opposition with the responsibility of not just critiquing the government but also providing constructive leadership, ensuring accountability, representing public concerns, and communicating effectively during challenging times. The Opposition's ability to meet these expectations can significantly influence the political landscape and contribute to bringing peaceful resolution of the current conflicts.

We, the Meetei diaspora would like to inquire about the specific actions and initiatives that you and your parties have undertaken to address the on-going crisis in Manipur. The recent letters and memorandums sent to the Prime Minister and the President, as reported in the media, indicate your deep concern about the situation. However, to gain a comprehensive understanding of your efforts, we kindly request detailed information on the steps taken by you and your respective parties to contribute to resolving the crisis.

Your prompt response to this inquiry would not only provide clarity on the opposition's stance and involvement in addressing the crisis but also help in fostering transparency and accountability during these challenging times for the state of Manipur to the larger population. We urgently urge you to individually or collectively work proactively with the ruling dispensation to bring an end to the unnecessary suffering inflicted on the citizens of India in Manipur.

Sincerely,

Yambem Arun Meetei
Secretary General
World Meetei Council

Rabbie Angom
Trustee
Meetei Yaipha Lup (Europe)

Indira Laisram
Representative
Global Manipur Federation