



UNITED PEOPLES' FRONT (UPF)  
&  
KUKI NATIONAL ORGANISATION (KNO)



## PRESS RELEASE

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The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, representatives of the Kuki-Zo groups under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) framework, namely the **Kuki National Organisation (KNO)** and the **United People's Front (UPF)** and officials of the Government of Manipur held the second round of tripartite talks in New Delhi on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December. Discussions focussed on **the demand for Union Territory with Legislature for the Kuki-Zo people.**

The UPF and KNO delegations were led by senior leaders of the two umbrella organisations. The MHA was represented by the Government of India's long-serving Security Advisor for the North East, while a senior official represented the Government of Manipur. Deliberations during this round of talks primarily focused on land-related issues and governance in the hill areas inhabited by Kuki Zo.

During the discussions, **the UPF and KNO informed that tribal land rights in the hill districts of Manipur are historically and customarily vested in tribal village chiefs.** Emphasis was on the traditional practice that this foundational principle of hill governance has been systematically undermined by successive policies of the Manipur Government. It was also stressed that the logical and constitutionally consistent future for the **Kuki Zo population is to have its own governance mechanism under a Union Territory with Legislature**, which would provide the necessary institutional framework to safeguard their traditional land rights.

**UPF and KNO further stressed that Constitution based political solution for the Kuki-Zo hill areas is no longer a question of administrative reorganisation but an existential necessity.** The total physical separation of populations since 3 May 2023, the overt weaponisation of state machinery against the tribal citizens and the systematic obliteration from the Imphal Valley are self-evident facts that are on record. These are clear indicators that the Manipur Government abdicated its constitutional responsibilities. **Therefore, reintegration under the existing state administrative framework is no longer possible, and separate political solution remains the only viable path to normalcy, peace and stability.**

It was also pointed out that the violence of 2023 was not an isolated, but the culmination of decades of aggressive land policies and political bullying aimed at dispossessing tribal communities of their ancestral lands. **A Union Territory Legislature would have the authority and neutrality required to enact and enforce laws capable of halting this long-standing process of dispossession.**

Unpalatable allegations prior to the outbreak of violence by the Manipur Government, such as sustained vilification campaign branding indigenous Kuki-Zo villagers as 'encroachers' and 'illegal immigrants' to justify eviction drives in the hill areas were also highlighted. **Manipur**



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**Government systematically dismantled the administrative boundary between the hills and the valley to facilitate encroachment.** This includes the executive orders issued in June 2011, through which the jurisdiction of valley-based police stations was extended into hill subdivisions. This placed the security of Kuki-Zo areas in the hands of valley-centric forces during the violence of May 2023, which exacerbated their vulnerability. To repose trust in the Manipur Legislative Assembly to legislate fairly on matters concerning tribal land is no longer to be expected.

On land administration, the valley sub-registrars illegally registered land deeds for properties physically located in hill districts, which created overlapping jurisdictions in hundreds of villages. The practice subverted the authority of the Hill Areas Committee (HAC) and violated Section 2 of the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960. **Both security and land records must be completely severed from the control of the Manipur State Government and administrative mechanism for neutral policing, transparent governance, and accurate, non-partisan land records must be expedited.**

**The social contract between the Kuki-Zo people and the State of Manipur has broken down beyond repair.** Article 371C failed in practice, as the Hill Areas Committee has been repeatedly bypassed and rendered ineffective in preventing either the violence or the policies that were engineered.

The State has systematically been an aggressor on the tribal population at large. The Kuki Zo people cannot be governed by a government that has enabled its ethnic cleansing. **Creation of a Union Territory with a Legislature remains the only constitutional and viable solution for ensuring justice, security, normalcy and lasting peace.**

Sd/  
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UPF and KNO