NAMTA CANADA

NORTH AMERICAN MANIPUR TRIBAL ASSOCIATION – CANADA

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Date: May 30, 2023

High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Case Postale 2500
CH-1211 Genève 2 Dépôt, Switzerland

Plea to set up UNHCR Field Sites in Manipur, India

Honorable High Commissioner Mr. Grandi:

NAMTA Canada would like to collectively express our grave concern for the lives and well-being of our people, families and relatives, in Manipur, India. Since the 3rd of May 2023, the violence unleashed on the minority Kuki tribes is tantamount to ethnic cleansing. Over 69 people have been killed, hundreds severely injured, churches and homes burned, looted and destroyed and over 30,000 individuals have become Internally Displaced People (IDP).

Heavily armed mobs formed by the radicalized elements in the majority Meitei community such as *Arambai Tenggol* and *Meitei Leepun* have wreaked havoc on our community. These groups seemingly have the tacit support and backing of the state security forces and the top leadership of the state which allowed them to operate with impunity. Witness accounts suggest the state security forces were leading and providing cover for the ravaging mobs as they entered tribal neighborhoods and decimated them. Similar attacks were led by the Manipur Police Commando units in the rural areas where tribal village fields are littered with the remnants of state issued munitions, including mortars.

Media reports from the state have been largely rife with misinformation promulgated by the state government and other malicious actors especially due to the suspension of internet services in the hill districts to counter any false assertions from Imphal. Tribal volunteers who fight back to defend their land and people are simply branded as “terrorists” by the state without any evidence.

We are desperately trying to highlight the plight of our people in order to stop the loss of another precious life or the burning of another humble abode. We request your office to establish UNHCR Field Sites where these atrocities are being carried out in Manipur and have on-the-ground presence at the major relief camp centers in Lamka, Kangpokpi and in the Imphal valley as well.

Sincerely,

For NAMTA Canada, and its members

Copies to:

1. UNHCR Chief of Mission in India (Indne@unhcr.org)
2. UNHCR Head of Field Office at Chennai (Indch@unhcr.org)