NAMTA CANADA

NORTH AMERICAN MANIPUR TRIBAL ASSOCIATION – CANADA

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Date: July 09, 2023

Director, Indrika Ratwatte
UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
18th Floor, Capital Tower
All Seasons Place
87/1 Wireless Road
Bangkok 10330, Thailand

Re: Plea to set up UNHCR Field Sites in Manipur, India

Dear Director Ratwatte:

NAMTA Canada would like to express our appreciation for the response you sent us on June 08, 2023 (HCR/BKK-RBAP/MSC/445).

Since our last correspondence dated May 30, 2023, the attacks against the Kuki-Zomi people have persisted, resulting in an alarming increase in casualties and collateral damage. To date, over 50,000 Kuki-Zomi individuals have been displaced, 124 lives have been lost, 6,137 houses have been burned, and 355 churches have been torched by Meitei militant groups and state forces. In this ongoing conflict, the majority Meitei population has the fortune of state support along with its security forces and continues to inflict harm upon the Kuki-Zomi minority even two months later. The sustained violence and neglect of our people have placed a tremendous burden on our community, as we strive to provide for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) amidst escalating needs.

We are heartened to learn that UNHCR has already aided and is currently coordinating a Rapid Joint Needs Assessment with other humanitarian agencies in the state. Regrettably, none of this aid has reached the Kuki-Zomi people in the hill districts. The Meitei forces have obstructed the transportation of goods from the capital city of Imphal to any Kuki-Zomi areas. Our investigation confirms that our people have not received any assistance, and the situation is dire. Aid for the Kuki-Zomi people has come via Mizoram or Nagaland, our neighboring states. The Kuki-Zomis have not received any support from the state or central government.

You mentioned a partner agency that is assisting UNHCR. We kindly request you to identify the agency so that we may contact them for aid request and delivery. It is disheartening to witness that even humanitarian aid is being distributed along ethnic lines. If the partner agency is Meitei-based, there is a high risk that their radical actors will hinder the distribution of any aid to the Kuki-Zomis. Furthermore, we have IDPs in New Delhi, Guwahati, Mizoram, and Assam. We kindly request information on the locations where these IDPs can access services and assistance.

We remain grateful and hope that the aid provided by UNHCR will reach those in need in Manipur, as well as the other locations. We greatly appreciate your attention to this matter and eagerly await a positive response.

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)