



GENOCIDE WARNING: ETHNIC CONFLICT IN MANIPUR, INDIA October 2023

Manipur, one of India's northeastern states, has witnessed violent ethnic conflict between the majority Meitei community and the minority tribal Kuki community for the past five months. The [deadly clashes](#) have left over 200 people dead and over 70,000 displaced.

Manipur, with a total population of 3.2 million, is geographically divided into the central valley, largely populated by the mostly Hindu Meitei, and the surrounding hills, inhabited by the predominantly Christian Kuki, Naga and other tribal communities.

The trigger for the violence was a [Manipur High Court order](#) directing the state government to consider inclusion of the Meitei in the Scheduled Tribe category. This inclusion would grant them reservations (quotas) in jobs and educational institutions. The Kuki and Naga already enjoy Scheduled Tribe status. They protested granting the same status to the Meitei, who constitute a majority in numbers and in political power.

After the [protests turned violent](#) on May 3, 2023, many incidents of murder, rape, kidnapping, torture, sexual assault and arson ensued, affecting people from both communities.

The violence has driven nearly all the Meitei living in the hills to the valley and forced almost all Kuki inhabiting the valley into the hills. The state is [completely segregated](#) along ethnic lines. Even police officers are [ethnically divided](#). [Theft of weapons and ammunition](#) from police armories has worsened the security situation.

Members of both communities are crammed into [overcrowded relief camps](#). Scarcity of basic resources and medical supplies in these camps has turned the conflict into a [humanitarian crisis](#).

The state government, run by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has done little to restore trust between the communities. It took BJP prime minister Narendra Modi [two months](#) to even acknowledge the Manipur violence, when a [video](#) showing two Kuki women being paraded naked by a Meitei mob caused public outrage.

The state has imposed [long internet shutdowns](#), restricting access to information and stifling public protest. Manipur chief minister N. Biren Singh, himself a Meitei, blames [illegal Kuki immigration from neighboring Myanmar](#) and [drug trafficking](#) for the violence. The indigenous Kuki, ethnically similar to tribes in Myanmar, fear displacement from their ancestral lands.

Manipur has a history of insurgencies. The current conflict has a [communal character](#). Hundreds of [Kuki churches and Meitei temples](#) have been destroyed.

Genocide Watch considers the ethnic conflict in Manipur to be at **Stage 3: Discrimination**, **Stage 4: Dehumanization**, **Stage 5: Organization**, **Stage 6: Polarization** and **Stage 8: Persecution**. The government's repeated attribution of violence to illegal immigration and [external forces](#) is characteristic of **Stage 10: Denial**.

Genocide Watch recommends that the state and union government:

- Adhere to directions issued in the [Supreme Court order](#) of Aug. 7, 2023, for an impartial investigation into crimes perpetrated during the conflict and during distribution of relief supplies.
- Ensure adequate supply of medicines, food, and other provisions to relief camps.
- Take immediate measures to recover the weapons and ammunition looted from state armories.
- Restore internet services.
- Assist families of missing persons to identify unclaimed bodies in mortuaries.
- Set up a [truth and reconciliation commission](#) to initiate ethnic reconciliation and restore stability.