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Authorities Fail to Address Ethnic Violence in India's Manipur State

Armed Groups Targeting Civilians in Reprisal Attacks

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On November 16, a mob in India's Manipur state attempted to storm the home of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and [attacked properties of other ruling Bharatiya Janata Party \(BJP\) leaders](#). The assailants were protesting the government's failure to end ongoing ethnic violence in the state.

What was especially notable was that the protesters belonged to the majority Meitei community, which has had his government's support. The chief minister has been promoting the BJP's Hindu majoritarian ideology by backing the primarily Hindu Meitei. That has [deepened distrust](#) of the minority tribal groups of Manipur, known as the Kuki-Zo, who are mostly Christian. Biren Singh's administration even provided political protection to [militant Meitei groups like the Arambai Tenggol](#), which have attacked the Kuki-Zo.

Since violence first broke out in Manipur in May 2023, nearly 250 [people have been killed](#), [dozens of women raped](#), and tens of thousands displaced. Civil society activists who had [warned](#) that prejudiced policies would encourage further violence found themselves under government [investigation](#).

Now, both Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities are facing reprisals by armed groups, often [targeting women](#).

On November 7, Meitei gunmen attacked a settlement of the Kuki-Zo ethnic Hmar community in Jiribam. The [autopsy report of a woman found](#)

she was beaten and burned to death, sparking anger over suspected rape.

On November 9, Kuki-Zo gunmen killed a Meitei woman in Bishnupur district.

On November 10, at least 10 members of the Hmar community were killed in an alleged armed exchange with security forces. Kuki-Zo groups said that those killed were village self-defense volunteers. Meanwhile, Hmar militants killed two men sheltering in a Meitei displaced persons shelter in Jiribam, and abducted three women and three children.

The recovery of the bodies of women and children that were abducted have sparked protests since November 16, with Meitei groups warning that if the government continued to fail to act, it would "bear the brunt of the people's discontentment." The authorities ordered curfew and shut down the internet, but protests continued.

It is evident that the current approach has only enabled the atrocities to spiral out of control, with at least 20 people, including a protester, killed in the latest outbreak of violence since November 7. It is critical that the government response ensures the protection of Kuki-Zo and Meitei people alike.

ecoi.net description:

Manipur state: Mob attacked properties of ruling party's leaders in protest of government's failure to end ethnic violence

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