
VIOLENCE IN MANIPUR, NORTH-EAST INDIA

Investigative Report to the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance

21st June 2023



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Executive summary

Seven weeks after communal violence broke out in Manipur in north-east India, a picture is emerging of grave abuses against human rights, human dignity and disruption of peaceful relations between people groups. As this brief report sets out in witness testimony, there are clear indications that ethnic and economic disputes have been weaponized against the acceptance of religious pluralism and the ability of individuals to freely worship.

Many tens of thousands of people have been displaced, numerous villages in Manipur are reported to have been destroyed, with church and tribal associations listing hundreds of Christian buildings leveled to ashes. All this is reported in Indian and some international news media. But the scale of the destruction of religious places of worship deserves far wider attention.

With access to Manipur restricted and the internet shut down, it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions on either the breadth of the violence, or whether it was pre-meditated and coordinated, as some allege. It is to be noted that if the conflict is explained by citing ethnic or economic disputes between valley people and tribals from the hills, account still needs to be given as to why churches among both Meiteis and Kukis were destroyed. There is a clear religious dimension.

At the 15th May 2023 meeting of the Council of Experts to the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance, concerns were raised by a number of the members of the Council of Experts present about the recent violence in Manipur, following which this investigative report was initiated.

On Thursday 1 June 2023, a fact-finding webinar, chaired by me, was organized by some members of the Council of Experts to hear eye-witness testimony. This report summarises content from the session, together with supplementary evidence submitted for consideration. It is a snapshot - not a comprehensive assessment or evaluation of either motive or blame – and is the assessment of just those involved. The report includes consequential findings and recommendations, but the full facts must be established when peace is restored and for justice and reconciliation to be pursued.

David Campanale

Chair of this Investigative Report and Webinar Evidence Gathering session

Member of the Council of Experts to IRFBA

EVIDENCE GATHERING SESSION

1. Overview

Manipur, North- East India, is a state that shares its border with Myanmar and is characterized by its hilly terrain. The primary inhabitable area is the Imphal Valley, which accounts for approximately 10% of the state's total land area and is predominantly inhabited by the Meitei community of people. The tribal communities surround the valley from the surrounding hills. The hill tribes are classified as Kukis in the Southern region, and Nagas in the North-Eastern region.

The Meitei people comprise around 53% of the population of Manipur and mainly ascribe to Hindu religious beliefs and practices. The Land Reform Act of Manipur (1960) prevented the Meitei people from settling in the hill regions of the state. The tribal populations consist primarily of Christian Kuki and Christian Naga people and represent about 40% of the population of the state's 3.5 million inhabitants. The tribal people reside in the reserved hill areas, which account for around 90% of the geographic land space of Manipur. These people groups are not restricted in law from also settling in the Imphal Valley.

Politically, the Meitei people hold a dominant position in the Manipur Legislative Assembly. Out of the Assembly's 60 available seats, only 19 are reserved for 'Scheduled Tribes', which are specifically Nagas or Kukis. The remaining seats are unreserved. In the previous political election, Meitei candidates were elected to 39 of the 40 unreserved seats, to which the tribal groups expressed concerns about a disproportionate allocation of government resources directed towards the Meitei-dominated Imphal Valley.

This report details eye-witness testimonies from a violent clash that erupted between the Meitei people and the hillside tribal communities in early May 2023. The immediate cause of the violence can be traced to the High Court of Manipur's Order in April 2023, which directed the state government to consider the inclusion of the Meitei community in the 'Scheduled Tribe' (ST) list and submit such recommendation to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in the Government of India. This status would constitutionally grant the Meitei people privileges similar to those enjoyed by the tribal communities.

Within 4 weeks of the Order, the tribal communities protested against the High Court's decision, as it raised concerns among the Kukis who feared that the ST would enable Meiteis to purchase land in the prohibited hilly areas. As a result, the All-Tribal Student's Union Manipur called for a peaceful rally and solidarity march to take place on 3 May 2023 in all the seven hill districts of the state. The rallies were carried out peacefully in at least 5 districts. However, during the rally in Churachandpu district, which borders the Imphal Valley, violence broke out between the 60,000 protestors and the Meitei and Kuki populations, and it escalated quickly and severely to 10 other districts of the state. These were Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal, Kakching, Bishenpur, Jiribam, Tengnoupal, Kangpokpi, Churachandpur and Phezwal.

Homes, churches, institutions, businesses, and commercial buildings predominantly belonging to Meitei Christians and Kukis were systematically destroyed by arson across the districts.

Large-scale violence, looting and arson continued from 3 May – 6 May 2023 while the state government failed to respond. Described internationally as a large-scale ethnic conflict, the violence that ensued over a matter of days resulted in the loss of at least 100 lives; 300 people being injured; in excess of 26,000 persons being displaced; and over 50,000 persons being forced to relocate (ref: the Indian Express). According to a public statement (16 May 2023) by Archbishop Dominic Lumon of Imphal, the head of the Catholic Church in Manipur, around 13,800 refugees are in Imphal West, around 11,800 in Imphal East, around 4,500 in Bishnupur, 5,500 in Churachandpur, and around 7,000 people in Kangpokpi district.

In an updated assessment (15 June 2023) Archbishop Lumon described the ‘complete collapse of the constitutional machinery in the State,’ adding that ‘In the peripheries where sporadic violence keeps happening unabated, the mob is said to be marching alongside the State Police who do nothing when the mob goes about torching houses and looting at will.’ Assessing that ‘it will be wrong to categorically say that it is a religious conflict’, he concludes ‘the undercurrent of religious intolerance stands out’, adding ‘In the midst of these orchestrated propaganda, subtle attack on Christianity seems to have found a clean and unsuspecting space’.

Adding to the complexity of the situation, access to reliable and verifiable information has been difficult to obtain due to internet services in the state of Manipur having been suspended since 3 May 2023, according to an order issued by the Home Department of the State government. A petition challenging the internet ban has been filed before the Supreme Court of India.

This report draws attention to eyewitness testimonies that state that the events in Manipur have sharply and severely impacted the freedom of religion or belief of thousands of people within the region. As well as hundreds of churches being burned or otherwise destroyed, many Meitei Christians have been threatened to renounce their faith and accept a tribal religion.

People from both the Meiteis and Kukis have been killed and displaced, and both groups were given an opportunity to present eyewitness accounts during the evidence gathering session.

2. Protocols

Chatham House rules governed the content of the webinar, which was presented live on 1 June 2023.

The International Protocol on Documenting Violations of Religious Freedom was consulted by the organisers of the webinar for best practice in the collection of evidence from eyewitnesses. The eyewitness survivors signed a consent form to confirm that they were willing to present their testimonies, and they had the opportunity to physically conceal their faces during the webinar if they wished to do so. The consent form additionally informed the participants that their personal

data would be kept confidential outside the closed webinar forum, and that their real names would not be used on the report.

The organisers of the webinar also took caution to ensure that the witnesses from the Meitei people were physically separated in a different building to the witnesses from the Kuki people, in order to add additional layers of protection.

The evidence collected was for a single use only; for the production of this report. If any member person or organization wishes to collect further evidence, they are recommended to obtain it separately.

3. Eyewitness testimonies – Kuki People

The following individuals from the Kuki tribe, whose names have been concealed for safety purposes, shared their eyewitness accounts about the events that they witnessed in May 2023. Their testimonies are written below.

a) Ms G (of the Veiphei people, a Kuki ethnic group) – now residing in New Delhi

“I am from Churachandpur, Manipur, but I work in Delhi. I went to Manipur to visit my sick relatives and younger brother who was working at Manipur University. On 3 May 2023, after we had eaten and were relaxing, we started to hear that a peaceful march meant that we needed to stay alert. I felt uneasy so I locked the front door of the house. My brother then heard news that an angry mob entered the University, so he called the Security Offers. We heard that the men attacked the Boys’ Hostel, beat the residents, took their certificates, and burned the accommodation down. After a few minutes, they banged on my brother’s door, and we were very scared. They hit the door with bats and stones, and broke the front door down. We thought we must hide in our father’s bed-ridden room. When they banged on my father’s door, my brother decided to hide in the backyard in the bushes. I stayed with my sick father and hid my mobile phone. The mob kept asking for my brother and searching for him with a flashlight outside in the dark (it was approximately 8pm). Fortunately, they did not find him.

Had my brother been inside the house, I cannot imagine what would have happened to him. I was protected though because I trust in the living God. Still, I soon received a phone call telling me to move to another place in the Campus, and the mob dragged my father from his bed to take him there. We could not get hold of my father’s medicine in this new place, and I saw many people whose houses were burned down. I could not help them – the situation was helpless. Finally, we escaped with the help of the security forces and I returned to Delhi.”

b) Kuki survivor, Pastor T – now residing in Nagaland

“I am Pastor T, representing the Kuki Christian Church and a Seminary that was established on the same Campus but burned down on 4 May 2023. The day before, on 3 May 2023, at around 2.45pm, a Meitei mob (later identified as the groups called Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun) comprising of more than 500 people came on war footing and burned down the Church, the Kuki Christian Church Head Office, the Offset Press, the Book Room, and 12 residential living quarters. I had been a pastor at the church for two years.

I was in the campus just before the Meiteis broke in. I saw the Manipur police commandos, the paramilitaries standing on both sides of the entrance gate, but they appeared to not have any power to stop or control the perpetrators from burning down all the establishments in the Campus. The police did nothing to stop the fire in the campus but were busy just checking that the fire did not spread to our neighbours (despite their area not being vulnerable to catching fire).

I watched the burning fire with excruciating pain secretly from a distance. The agony will never be erased from my life.”

c) Kuki survivor, Ms M – now residing in Assam

“I am a scholar from Manipur University, I belong to the Kuki community, and I am staying in a female scholar hostel. The attack on the hostel started on 3 May 2023, between 9-10pm, and it quickly spread to other women’s hostels. During the attack, every woman hid – some in their bedrooms, some in the terrace, and some alone. 2 men holding guns entered my hostel and hunted for the Kuki women. I was staying on the top floor, opposite the staircase, and I was in the first room to be attacked by the mob. They broke through the doors of my room and I hid in my bathroom to see the entire scenario. Even now, I still feel traumatized and spend most of my time sleeping, even though my body has become numb. At the time of the attack, I tried hard to remain silent so that the mob could not find me.

Thanks to my prayers, the mob did not find me. Yet, the mob still set fire to, and destroyed, all my important documents like my certificates, paper publications, theses, and computers.

The mob tortured some of the Kuki men and women, and bound their hands, assaulted, harassed and threatened them. On 4 May 2023, the authorities successfully stepped in and transported the Kuki people away. All of the other University scholars, students and staff members fled the Campus in fear for their lives”.

d) Mr KV – now residing in Assam (of the Veiphei people, a Kuki ethnic group)

“I am a student of Manipur University and I am from the Veiphei community. I was staying in rented accommodation at the University when a mob forcibly entered on 3 May 2023. With other students, I ran into a field where we were caught and physically assaulted. I wounded my knee and feet on barbed wires while attempting to escape from the mob who were trying to murder us.

They hit my friend with a cricket bat, and we cried out in fear. One person who was not drunk among the mob members convinced the others to stop, so we could be taken to the village authorities. On the way there the mob continued to physically assault and slap us and beat us with a stick. They also kicked my friend.

At the police authority chairman's house, we were verbally assaulted and called illegal immigrants from Myanmar by the mob – they said we should go back to where we came from. They said, though, that since we had been living together with them for a year and a half they would be merciful to us. They called the police, but the police would not come because they were busy that evening. The mob told us that they would call the police in the morning and hoped we would go back to where we came from.

When we returned to our rented accommodation, a fellow roommate had already called a police officer and asked for an escort to take us to a police station. We went, but it was overcrowded. So we were escorted again to another location that we stayed in until 8 May 2023. From that date, I bought a plane ticket Assam where I currently am.”

e) Kuki survivor - Pastor K – still in Manipur

“I am a pastor from Manipur, and I came to Nagaland for this hearing. On 4 May 2023, at approximately 11.00am, two army Gypsies arrived at Newland Mission, where we were located. We appealed to them for assistance and requested to be taken along. However, they instructed us to use our own private vehicle, assuring us of protection and escort. boarded the Army Gypsy with three brothers and two sisters, while my wife, daughter, and other relatives joined us in three separate private cars. Unfortunately at around 11.30am, the Meitei mob stopped us, and they started pelting stones and beating us. They hit the private cars and burned them down. They used sticks and iron rods to beat us, and then forcefully pulled us out of the army vehicles. We were helpless and thought we would die that day. They also set fire to the private cars, intensifying our sense of impending doom.

Then, the Arambai Tenggol volunteers confined us to a room, locking us up in their office. To secure our safety, we barricaded the doors to prevent their entry. But, the Arambai Tenggol (who are Meitei religious actors) attacked us three times. We tried to block the main door. When they could not break the door, they starting shooting at, and broke through, the windows to assault us and I instinctively shielded my daughter to protect her.

We were held captive as part of a human exchange proposition, as our people had also detained some of theirs. However, those who held us captive rejected the proposed exchange and attempted to execute us.

Fortunately, around 7pm, 3 male leaders unlocked the door and rescued and transported to a camp. With the assistance we received, we subsequently relocated to the airport and made our way to Guwahati.

4. Kuki political analysis

a) Political leader from the Kuki community, Dr L

“I wish to share about some issues that concern the people in trouble in Manipur. The issues that recently occurred were based upon many foundations that had already been laid.

Firstly, there is media manipulation and fake news that is well maintained by the state government. Yesterday [31 May 2023], a reporter from India Today was intimidated and threatened by the Meitei community and from people in official offices. I have also seen media manipulation by the state government in other situations, for example in certain fact-finding teams.

Secondly, there has been a covering up of radical groups who have conveniently been getting arms and ammunition from the state armories – this has been reported on the local news and I can confirm it from my time on the ground. This has been very unfortunate. One army general has rightly put it that there has not been looting of arms or ammunition from the state on this occasion, and the reason is because the state has been complicit in handing it all over or not being resistant to it being taken.

Thirdly, it is remarkable how the narratives about the crisis have shifted frequently, from narratives about Kukis being illegal immigrants from the President; to the present narratives that call Kukis ‘narco-terrorists’. The Kuki community has been branded as having a link with the Chinese, which is a completely baseless claim.

We are therefore in a state of confusion with how the state and Indian governments are going to deal with the situation.

Next, the issue of security, imbalance and allegations of favouritism against the Kuki community from the state government. The Kuki people have been suffering immensely, including by being displaced on a large scale, but their concerns have not been met politically.”

5. Eyewitness testimonies – Meitei People

The following individuals from the Meitei people, whose names have been concealed for safety purposes, shared their eyewitness accounts about the events that they witnessed in May 2023. Their testimonies are written below.

a) Meitei survivor: Baptist Pastor S

“The Meitei Christians are stranded in the middle of discussions about this crisis, yet 250 Meitei Christian churches have been vandalized or destroyed by fire so far by the violent mob. In many cases, the mob has burned a church or house belonging to a Meitei Christian but has not damaged their neighbour’s door if they are not a Christian. If the buildings are right next to

each other, the mob will often carry the furniture of the Christian house or church out into the front yard and then burn it. The expensive furniture has been looted.

We are facing hostility by the Meiteis on the basis that we are Christians, and from the Kukis on the basis that we are Meiteis.

Churches have been burned in at least three Hill Districts – I have heard this information firsthand from Meitei Christians, and I started to compile a list. The headquarters of Manipur Baptist association, Meitei Presbyterian Synod, and the Church of God, Manipur have been destroyed. Another campaign by the extremists, is to convert church land into community centres, village gyms, and other buildings.

My church was burned, and when I rang the police, I was told that there were not enough policemen to respond or to guard properties at the time.

The state government has failed in its duty to protect life and property, and we can all just stand as mute spectators and watch our churches and properties be destroyed. The mobs have also burned many of our Christian documents and have forced people to convert away from Christianity and towards the indigenous religion of Sanahamism. One example I can give of the forced conversions is about a male Meitei Christian friend of mine who runs a private school. A mob came to the school and told him that the school had to hoist a flag of the regional community up place a picture on the wall of the indigenous religion called Sanahamism. The mob then told him to go and get his Bible, which the mob then said must be burned by him. When he refused to burn the Bible, the mob twice fired a gun in the air and then held him at gunpoint. The family members came running to the rescue and he managed to escape. However, the mob vandalized and destroyed the entire school building.

Christians are living in constant fear about being attacked at any time. Part of our identity and our churches are being destroyed. Our fundamental right to worship is being taken away, and as well as our churches being burned down, we have not been able to gather together for worship or prayer since 3 May 2023. We feel like a stranger in our own land, and we are in effect being required to choose between our faith or our land. We assess that the Meiteis are fearful of their community members converting to Christianity and so they are being violent. We ask the community around the world to raise a voice on behalf of us for our safety”.

6. Member of the Legislative Assembly of Manipur: Karhal District

“The Kukis and Meiteis have lived together in peace for a number of years, but now the Christians are forced to flee from Manipur due to the clear danger to their property and lives. Families are being separated and destroyed, and I fear that their lives will never be the same again. The violence that occurred in Manipur since 3 May 2023 due to the government security and administrative failure is heartbreaking and unfortunate.”

7. Journalist perspective

“To gather evidence, I was in the Imphal area for 3 days where the Meitei people live, and Churachandpur hills for 3 days where tribals live. 5 things surprised me and pointed to something dangerous.

- 1- The pace of the violence. In only 2-3 days, at least 3,000 homes and 290 churches were damaged, destroyed and burned – and this is a conservative estimate because the actual number could double this. The conservative estimate of numbers equates to 60 houses vandalized every hour during those violent days, or 1 house per minute.
- 2- The precision of the violence. It is remarkable that the properties belonging to the Naga tribe were left untouched. So, if the violence was spontaneous, how did the Meiteis not vandalise the Naga homes? It’s important to note that the people groups do not look very different from each other.
- 3- I was told several reliable sources that the Arambai Tenggol group of people appeared in almost every incident of violence; they were waiting outside homes and wearing black shirts.
- 4- The role of rumours. This is important because the Meitei people claim a particular timeline, but the tribal people claim a different timeline. We have been informed that it was the rumours that sparked the violence in the first area, and then there was retaliation to the houses being burned and people killed. Local people then joined in, because they heard through videos and photos that women had been raped and children had been killed by Kukis. People spread these rumours.
- 5- The erosion of trust. When I met ordinary Meiteis in Imphal, all were unhappy with the state government and its lack of response to the events. The people knew that the government had not done enough to prevent the violence or protect the people, and was ineffectual in curbing the violence.

Regarding the violence, I have 3 observations:

1. The government appears to have been biased for at least 5 years prior to the violence in favouring the Meitei people, including by creating policies that were against the tribal people. When the violence erupted, the state police were reportedly seen in the videos, which I can verify. It is reported that the police would come to a house before it was burned down, and they would ensure that the house was vacated so that the mob could burn it down.
2. The tribal people, especially the Kukis, were subjected to demonization through allegations of illegal immigration over 5 years. This was being alleged because there was a large influx of refugees from Myanmar; these people were also accused of cultivating poppies and being drug dealers. Misinformation usually always precedes organized violence.
3. Churachandpur sits on a vast reserve of oil and gas and successive governments, not just the BJP, but all governments have been eyeing this resource. As long as the tribals are there, they will not allow governments to give contracts to companies to extract oil. To me, in a way, this issue is similar to what happened in a state in Myanmar which was also rich in natural resources.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following action points are recommended:

1. The Indian government should send sufficient national Indian army units to protect and assure tribal villages vulnerable to attack. The violence must end and peace must be restored as a matter of urgency.
2. Refugees in relief camps, especially those in inaccessible regions, must have their needs met and be urgently assessed. Relief workers need to be given physical access to relief camps and the affected areas in the hill districts.
3. Full physical access must be given to investigative journalists into Manipur to be able to gather first-hand reliable information that can be reported internationally.
4. Inter-religious leaders should convene at the state level to diffuse the situation.
5. Due to the large-scale migration and travel from the state, additional flights should be made available with a cap on their fares.
6. Government helpline numbers must be set up to assist those still stuck in hostile territories.
7. Internet connection should be restored to provide citizens with access to information and ease of communication.
8. A Claims Commission should be set up to assess the scale of violence and the loss and to dispense adequate compensation to victims.
9. The rehabilitation of victims in relief camps and elsewhere to their homes, lands, and properties needs to be made possible.
10. A full investigation about the impact of the violence upon freedom of religion or belief and freedom of assembly should be undertaken by an independent commission.
11. The Courts should undertake a full and thorough review of the causes and perpetrators behind the violence, the use of media to spread false information, and the impact to freedom of religion or belief upon the Meitei Christian and Kuki Christian communities.
12. A specialist team of experts on freedom of religion or belief should be given access to affected regions by the state government to conduct detailed analysis about the impact to, and ongoing threats for, freedom of religion or belief in Manipur.

David Campanale

ANNEX 1: List of churches destroyed

Two lists of burnt and destroyed churches were supplied by individuals from Manipur that could be verified. It is recognised and anticipated that the real number of churches will be much higher than what is listed in this report, but due to a lack of internet access, it is difficult to verify further lists at this time.

A. List of burnt & destroyed Meitei Churches

No.	Name of churches/ associations	No. of churches destroyed
1	Presbyterian Church of India	55
2	Believer Eastern Church of India	39
3	Meitei Baptist Association	23
4	Meitei Evangelical Baptist Convention	13
5	Meitei Field	11
6	Evangelical Free Church of India	10
7	Meitei Mission Field	11
8	Independent Church of India	9
9	Evangelical Church of India	7
10	Viswa Vani	3
11	Evangelical Churches Association	2
12	Church of God Manipur	2
13	Assemblies of God	2
14	Good Shepherd Church of India	2
15	Meitei Christian Church	2
16	Manipur Evangelical Lutheran Church	2
17	Bengshok Church	2
18	Word of God for Asia	2
19	Brethren Church	2
20	Salvation Army	2
21	Independent (Other)	49
Total		250

No.	List of institutions/offices run by Meitei Christians
1	Calvary Theological Institute Manipur
2	Rapha Hospital and Research Centre
3	Breakthrough Mission India (Rehabilitation Centre)
4	Berean Grace Academy School
5	Hoi Children's Home
6	Meitei Baptist Association Head Office

7	Meitei Presbyterian Singlup Synod
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Source: These lists were shared by a Meitei Christian leader, 1 June 2023

B. List of church buildings burnt and destroyed

Sl. No.	NAME OF CHURCH	ADDRESS	STATUS	DATE OF ATTACK
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES ASSOCIATION (ECA)				
1	ECA Church building	Haokip veng	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
2	ECA Church building	Iroisemba	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
3	ECA Church building	Game Village	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
4	ECA Church building	Tentha, Imphal	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
5	ECA Church building	Khangabok	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
6	ECA Church building	Dopkon	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
7	ECA Church building	Lailampat	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
8	ECA Church building	Tollen	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
9	ECA Church building	Phoilenching	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
10	ECA Church building	Haotak Vajang	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CONVENTION CHURCH (EBCC)				
11	ECA Church building	Taothong	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
12	EBC Church Building	Tribal Colony	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
13	EBC Church Building	Paite Veng	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
14	EBC Church Building	National Games Village	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
15	EBC Church Building	Lamphelpat	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
16	EBC Church Building	Jiribam	Partial Burnt	03-May-23
17	EBC Church Building	Vengnuam	Partial Burnt	03-May-23
18	EBC Church Building	Langol	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
19	EBC Church Building	Paite Colony	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
MEITEI EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CONVENTION CHURCH (MEBCC)				
20	MEBC Church Building	Kwakeithel	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
21	MEBC Church Building	Kangmong	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
22	MEBC Church Building	Awang Jiri Leikai	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
23	MEBC Church Building	Thiyam Konjil	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23

24	MEBC Church Building	Khunou	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
25	MEBC Church Building	Nambol	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
26	MEBC Church Building	Toubul	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
27	MEBC Church Building	Nachou	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
28	MEBC Church Building	Naranseina	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
29	MEBC Church Building	Thamnapokpi	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
30	MEBC Church Building	Thanga Salam	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
31	MEBC Church Building	Heisnam	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
32	MEBC Church Building	Chingkha	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
33	MEBC Church Building	Khordak	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
34	MEBC Church Building	Wapokpi	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
35	MEBC Church Building	Mangjing Leikai	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
36	MEBC Church Building	Thiyam Konjil	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
37	MEBC Church Building	Thoubal Khunou	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
38	MEBC Church Building	Maidram	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
NEW TESTAMENT BAPTIST CHURCHES ASSOCIATION (NTBCA)				
39	NTBCA Church Building	Changangei	Burnt Down & Destroyed	04-May-23
40	NTBCA Church Building	U-Checkon	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
41	NTBCA Church Building	Ingorok	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
42	NTBCA Church Building	Tekcham	Burnt Down & Destroyed	03-May-23
ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH (MEITEI)				
43	AG Church Building	Nongmaikhong	Burnt & Vandalised	04-May-23
44	AG Church Building	Hawtak Kumbi	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
45	AG Church Building	Tentha	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
46	AG Church Building	Langmeidong	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
47	AG Church Building	Langmeithat	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
48	AG Church Building	Ishikha	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
49	AG Church Building	Hawtak Bethel	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
MANIPUR EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (MELC)				

50	MELC Church Building	Chairen	Burnt & Vandalised	04-May-23
51	MELC Church Building	Tentha	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
52	MELC Church Building	Imphal	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
ZOU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SYNOD (ZPCS)				
53	ZPCS Church Building	Bishnupur	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
54	ZPCS Church Building	Lamphel	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
INDEPENDENT CHURCH OF INDIA (ICI)				
55	ICI Church Building	Checkon	Vandalised	04-May-23
56	ICI Church Building	Lamphel	Completely Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
57	ICI Church Building (Meitei)	Moirangkhnou	Completely Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
58	ICI Church Building (Meitei)	Kumbi	Destroyed	04-May-23
59	ICI Church Building (Meitei)	Moirang College Gate	Vandalised	04-May-23
60	ICI Church Building (Meitei)	Phubala	Vandalised	04-May-23
61	ICI Church Building (Meitei)	Chana	Destroyed	04-May-23
62	ICI Church Building (Meitei)	Khulakpat	Destroyed	04-May-23
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEI (RPCNEI)				
63	RPCNEI Church Building	Langol, Imphal	Burnt & Vandalised	03-May-23
64	RPCNEI Church Building (Meitei)	Keibul	Burnt & Vandalised	05-May-23
65	RPCNEI Church Building (Meitei)	Keirenphabi	Destroyed	05-May-23
66	RPCNEI Church Building (Meitei)	Tokpaching	Destroyed	05-May-23
EVANGELICAL ORGANIZATION CHURCH (EOC)				
67	EOC Church Building	Game Village	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
68	EOC Church Building	Sualamphai	Completely Burnt	05-May-23
69	EOC Church Building	Sarampatong	Completely Burnt	05-May-23
70	EOC Church Building	Khawvaiphai	Completely Burnt	05-May-23
EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF INDIA (EFCI)				
71	EFCI Church Building	Sangaiprou	Completely Vandalised	05-May-23
72	EFCI Church Building	Lamphel	Completely Vandalised	04-May-23
73	EFCI Church Building (Meitei)	Toupokpi	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
74	EFCI Church Building (Meitei)	Keinou	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
75	EFCI Church Building	Langpok	Completely Burnt	04-May-23

76	EFCI Church Building (Meitei)	Langmeidong	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
77	EFCI Church Building (Meitei)	Napat	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
78	EFCI Church Building (Meitei)	Ghari	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
79	EFCI Church Building (Meitei)	Leimaram	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
80	EFCI Church Building	Langol	Ransack	04-May-23
81	EFCI, Church Building (Meitei)	Waikhong	Vandalised	04-May-23
EVANGELICAL ASSEMBLY CHURCH (EAC)				
82	EAC Church Building	Wongoo Awang	Completely destroyed	04-May-23
83	EAC Church Building (Meitei)	Saban E	Completely destroyed	04-May-23
MANIPUR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SYNOD (MPCS)				
84	MPCS Church Building	New Checkon Road., Imphal East District	Partial Destroyed	03-May-23
85	MPCS Church Building	Terakhongsangbi, Bishnupur District	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
86	MPCS Church Building	Keiren, (Leimapokpam), Bishnupur District	Complete Demolished	04-May-23
87	MPCS Church Building	Chingphu, Bishnupur District	Partially Destroyed	04-May-23
88	MPCS Church Building	Leimaram Awang Leikai, Bishnupur Dist.	Partially Destroyed	04-May-23
89	MPCS Church Building	Leimaram Makha Leikai, Bishnupur Dist.	Partially Destroyed	04-May-23
90	MPCS Church Building	Waroiching, Bishnupur District	Partially Destroyed	04-May-23
91	MPCS Church Building	N. Terakhong, Kangpokpi District	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
92	MPCS Church Building	L. Lhangnom, Kangpokpi District	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
93	MPCS Church Building	Sekmai, Imphal East District	Completely destroyed	05-May-23
MANIPURI PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MIZORAM SYNOD				
94	MPC Church Building	Awang Khunou, Imphal West District	Demolished	04-May-23
95	MPC Church Building	Kwakeithel, Imphal West District	Destroyed	04-May-23
96	MPC Church Building	Ngangkha, Bishnupur District	Destroyed	04-May-23

97	MPC Church Building	Heisnam, Bishnupur District	Completely destroyed	04-May-23
98	MPC Church Building	Chingkha, Bishnupur District	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
99	MPC Church Building	Ithai, Bishnupur Dist.	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
MEITEI PRESBYTERIAN SINGLUP SYNOD				
100	MPS Church Building	Kumbi, Bishnupur District	Destroyed	03-May-23
101	MPS Church Building	Kumbi Uyung Makhong, Bishnupur Dist.	Destroyed	03-May-23
102	MPS Church Building	Kumbi Thingel Leikai, Bishnupur Dist.	Destroyed	03-May-23
103	MPS Church Building	Moirangkhou, Bishnupur District	Destroyed	03-May-23
104	MPS Church Building	Thanga Ngaram, Bishnupur District	Burnt & Destroyed	03-May-23
105	MPS Church Building	Moirang, Bishnupur District	Burnt & Destroyed	03-May-23
106	MPS Church Building	Moirang Turenban, Bishnupur District	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
107	MPS Church Building	Tronglaobi, Bishnupur District	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
108	MPS Church Building	Naranseina, Bishnupur District	Destroyed	03-May-23
109	MPS Church Building	Phubala, Bishnupur District	Burnt & Destroyed	03-May-23
110	MPS Church Building	Thinungei, Bishnupur District	Destroyed	03-May-23
111	MPS Church Building	Ningthoukhong, Bishnupur District	Burnt & Destroyed	03-May-23
112	MPS Church Building	Bishnupur, Bishnupur District	Destroyed	03-May-23
113	MPS Church Building	Nambol, Bishnupur District	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
114	MPS Church Building	Kakching Khunou, Kakching District	Destroyed by JCB	04-May-23
115	MPS Church Building	Moirang Hanuba, Imphal West District	Demolished	04-May-23
116	MPS Church Building	Kwakeithel Mission Compound, Imphal West District	Demolished & Burnt	04-May-23
117	MPS Church Building	Lairok, Kakching Dist.	Demolished	04-May-23
118	MPS Church Building	Sarik, Kakching Dist.	Demolished	04-May-23

119	MPS Church Building	Tokpa Ching, Kakching District	Demolished	04-May-23
120	MPS Church Building	Ngaikhong, Bishnupur District	Demolished	05-May-23
121	MPS Church Building	Ngaikhong Khulen, Bishnupur District	Demolished	05-May-23
122	MPS Church Building	Ngakchou, Bishnupur District	Demolished	05-May-23
123	MPS Church Building	Keinou, Bishnupur District	Demolished	05-May-23
124	MPS Church Building	Oinam, Bishnupur Dist.	Demolished	05-May-23
125	MPS Church Building	Warukok, Kakching District	Destroyed	05-May-23
126	MPS Church Building	Arong, Kakching Dist.	Destroyed	05-May-23
127	MPS Church Building	Sekmaijing, Kakching District	Destroyed	05-May-23
128	MPS Church Building	Thanga Ngaram, Bishnupur District	Burnt & Destroyed	05-May-23
129	MPS Church Building	Thanga Salam, Bishnupur District	Destroyed	05-May-23
130	MPS Church Building	Nachou, Bishnupur District	Burnt & Destroyed	05-May-23
131	MPS Church Building	Thoubal, Thoubal Dist.	Destroyed	05-May-23
132	MPS Church Building	Yaripok, Thoubal Dist.	Destroyed	05-May-23
133	MPS Church Building	Salungpham, Thoubal District	Destroyed	05-May-23
134	MPS Church Building	Charangpat, Thoubal District	Destroyed	05-May-23
135	MPS Church Building	Ukhongsang, Thoubal District	Destroyed	05-May-23
136	MPS Church Building	Mayang Imphal, Imphal West District	Destroyed	05-May-23
137	MPS Church Building	Uchiwa, Imphal West District	Destroyed	05-May-23
138	MPS Church Building	Langol, Imphal West	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
139	MPS Church Building	Heisnam, Bishnupur District	Completely Destroyed	
TANGPHAI PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SYNOD(TPCS)				
140	TPCS Church building	B Phainuam, Kangpokpi District	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
141	TPCS Church building	Phainuam, Kangpokpi District	Completely Burnt	03-May-23

142	TPCS Church building	P Thianzawl, Imphal East	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
143	TPCS Church building	Mantripukri, Imphal West	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
144	TPCS Church building	Nongpokphaijang Kangpokpi	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
145	TPCS Church building	Game Village, Imphal West	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
146	TPCS Church building	Th. Salemphei, Kangpokpi	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
147	TPCS Church building	New Lambulane, Imphal West	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
148	TPCS Church building	L Vaiphei Veng, Imphal West	Completely Burnt	05-May-23
149	TPCS Church building	Chingmei, Bishenpur District	Completely Burnt	06-May-23
150	TPCS Church building	K Sharonphai, Kangpokpi District	Completely Burnt	06-May-23
151	TPCS Church building	Tuinuamphai, Kangpokpi District	Completely Burnt	06-May-23
152	TPCS Church building	Heiroklen, Kangpokpi District	Completely Burnt	06-May-23
153	TPCS Church building	K Tanguam, Kangpokpi District	Completely Burnt	06-May-23
154	TPCS Church building	GPC Langol, Imphal West	Completely Burnt	06-May-23
KUKI CHRISTIAN CHURCH (KCC)				
155	KCC Centre Church building	Imphal	Burnt & Demolished	04-May-23
156	KCC Centre Church building	Khongsai Veng	Burnt & Demolished	04-May-23
157	KCC Centre Church building	Game Village	Burnt & Demolished	04-May-23
158	KCC Centre Church building	Sadar Joute	Burnt & Demolished	04-May-23
159	KCC Centre Church building	T. Mongjang	Burnt & Demolished	04-May-23
160	KCC Centre Church building	VK. Mongbung	Burnt & Demolished	04-May-23
161	KCC Centre Church building	Theilei	Burnt & Demolished	03-May-23
162	KCC Centre Church building	Moljol	Burnt & Demolished	06-May-23
163	KCC Centre Church building	Chaningpokpi	Burnt & Demolished	06-May-23

164	KCC Centre Church building	Haotah Phailen	Burnt & Demolished	06-May-23
165	KCC Centre Church building	Aihang	Burnt & Demolished	05-May-23
166	KCC Centre Church building	Bungbalkhawlien	Burnt & Demolished	05-May-23
167	KCC Centre Church building	Sarampatong	Burnt & Demolished	05-May-23
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH (RCC)				
168	St. Paul Church	Sangaiprou, Imphal	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
169	Holy Redeemer Church	Canchipur	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
170	Holy Cross Church	Kakching Khunou	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
RONGMEI NAGA BAPTIST CHURCH (RNBA)				
171	RNBA Church Building	Imphal	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
KOMREM BAPTIST CHURCH (KBC)				
172	KBC Church Building	Imphal Area	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
BELIEVER'S EASTERN CHURCH (BEC)				
173	BEC Church Building	T Lhangkicho	Burnt & Vandalised	03-May-23
174	BEC Church Building	Thumkhonglok	Burnt & Vandalised	03-May-23
CHURCH OF CHRIST (COC)				
175	COC Church Building	Changangei Ucheckon	- Burnt & Vandalised	03-May-23
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF INDIA-REFORMED (PCI-R)				
176	PCI-R Church Building (Meitei)	Nungshida	Burnt & Vandalised	04-May-23
177	PCI-R Church Building (Meitei)	Naudakhong	Burnt & Vandalised	04-May-23
178	PCI-R Church Building (Meitei)	Asha	Burnt & Vandalised	04-May-23
SALVATION ARMY				
179	Salvation army (Meitei)	Chairel	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
180	Salvation army (Meitei)	Kwakeithel	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
VAIPEI BAPTIST CHURCHES ASSOCIATION (VBCA)				
181	VBCA Church Building	Lairok	Completely Burnt	06-May-23
182	VBCA Church Building	S Phaiza	Completely Burnt	05-May-23
183	VBCA Church Building	Vaiphei Veng	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
184	VBCA Church Building	Happy Valley	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
185	VBCA Church Building	Salam Patong	Completely Burnt	04-May-23
186	VBCA Church Building (Meitei)	K Wangkhem	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
CALVARY CHURCH (CC)				
187	CC Church Building (Meitei)	Sibhanagar Khongjom	Destroyed	03-May-23
FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH (FCC)				

188	FCC Church Building (Meitei)	Tekcham Bazar, Khongjom	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
NEW TESTAMENT BAPTIST CHURCH (NTBC)				
189	NTBC Church Building (Meitei)	Tekcham, Khongjom	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF INDIA (ECI)				
190	ECI Church Building (Meitei)	Tentha	Destroyed	03-May-23
UNION BAPTIST CHURCH (UBC)				
191	UBC Church Building (Meitei)	Kakching Irum Mapan	Completely Burnt	03-May-23
MEITEI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION (MBA)				
192	MBA Church Building	Wangjing	Destroyed	03-May-23
193	MBA Church Building	Lamding	Destroyed	03-May-23
194	MBA Church Building	Moreh	Destroyed	03-May-23
GOOD SHEPHERD COMMUNITY CHURCH (GSCC)				
195	GSCC Church Building (Meitei)	Heirolk Chingon	Destroyed	03-May-23
BELIEVER CHURCH (BC)				
196	BC Church Building (Meitei)	Tentha	Destroyed	03-May-23
197	BC Church Building (Meitei)	Kakmayai	Destroyed	03-May-23
198	Eastern BC Building	Narenkonjin	Destroyed	03-May-23
KUKI BAPTIST CONVENTION CHURCH (KBCC)				
199	KBCC Church Building	National Games Village	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
200	KBCC Church Building	Langol	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
201	KBCC Church Building	Lamphel	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
202	KBCC Church Building	New Lambulane	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
203	KBCC Church Building	Haokip veng	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
204	KBCC Church Building	Chassad Avenue	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
205	KBCC Church Building	Kamuching	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
206	KBCC Church Building	Leimakhong	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
207	KBCC Church Building	Tollen	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
208	KBCC Church Building	L.Jangnomphai	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
209	KBCC Church Building	Sajal	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
210	KBCC Church Building	TL Gamngai	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
211	KBCC Church Building	Gotengphai	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
212	KBCC Church Building	Gamnomphai	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
213	KBCC Church Building	H.Kholen	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
214	KBCC Church Building	S.Khopi	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
215	KBCC Church Building	S.Khothah	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
216	KBCC Church Building	Wakan	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
217	KBCC Church Building	P.Khonomphai	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23

218	KBCC Church Building	H.Champhai	Burnt & Destroyed	04-May-23
219	KBCC Church Building	Chayang	Burnt & Destroyed	31-May-23
220	KBCC Church Building	S Phailengkot	Burnt & Destroyed	31-May-23
221	KBCC Church Building	Chingdai Khullen	Burnt & Destroyed	31-May-23
222	KBCC Church Building	C Zoulen	Burnt & Destroyed	31-May-23
223	KBCC Church Building	Thingjang	Burnt & Destroyed	31-May-23
224	KBCC Church Building	Lhanghoi	Burnt & Destroyed	31-May-23
225	KBCC Church Building	Moljang	Burnt & Destroyed	31-May-23
OTHERS				
226	Lamphel Baptist Church	Lamphel	Completely Burnt	06-May-23
227	Hmar Christian Church	New Lambulane	Completely Burnt	05-May-23
228	Independent Church	Langol	Vandalised	31-May-23

Source: This list was shared by Churachandpur District Christians Goodwill Council, 31 May 2023

Data submissions were also received by the following groups or organisations about the number of churches destroyed during the violence. However, without full access to the state of Manipur and other primary sources, it has not been possible to independently verify them.

1. Zomi Students' Federation Media/ IT Cell, dated 13 June 2023. The total number of churches claimed to be burned or destroyed is 354.
2. Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum Media Cell. The total number of churches claimed to be burned or destroyed is 220.
3. A 15 June 2023 BBC news report states: "According to the information we have received, 508 churches have been demolished," said Alan Brooks, a spokesman for the United Christian Forum in Northeast India." (<https://www.bbc.com/nepali/articles/cp9d0dewn94o>)

ANNEX 2: Freedom of Religion or Belief Analysis

The issues in Manipur began as a political matter between two ethnic communities, borne out of the proposal to grant 'Scheduled Tribe' benefits to the Meitei community. While local leadership in Manipur has not explicitly called the violence out for being religiously motivated, the focus of violence between the ethnicities soon shifted towards targeting religious identity and religious structures, including a wide scale targeting of the Christians amongst the Meiteis

Stakeholders among Meitei Christians were asked why they were being targeted in a predominantly Meitei and Kuki dispute. It was clear that the predominantly Christian Kuki-Zomi tribal communities in Churachandpur had been accusing two Meitei community organizations in Imphal for inciting the violence - the Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun. It is worth noting that the Meitei people, who account for more than 50% of the state's population, are predominantly

Hindu. The answers given by the witnesses in the region as to the reason for the violence were the following:

- a. Meiteis who follow the indigenous religion i.e. Sanahamism (and even Hinduism) want to get rid of Christianity from their community. They want to revive their own religion. Many Meitei Christians have been threatened with their life and have been given an ultimatum to renounce their Christian faith and accept Sanahamism.
- b. Meitei Hindus fear that the Christians are growing in number and are at 4 lakh (400,000 in population) amongst the 14 lakh Meiteis (1,400,000 in population). Officials of the Meitei Christian Churches Council Manipur (MCCCM) believe that Christians number 1 in 50,000 to 1 lakh.
- c. Christianity is seen as a tribal religion by the Meiteis, as it is practiced, in the main, by the tribal people in Manipur – mainly the Kukis. Christians among the Meiteis are therefore considered as ‘tribals’ by the Meitei community. It may be that the people who have attacked Meitei Christians are perceiving their attack to be against tribals more generally.

From the witness testimonies and wider reporting on the situation, it is evident that the large-scale violence is not sporadic and random. The Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun, Meitei extremist groups, have been observed to target Christians deliberately, either forcing them out of the land or requiring that they convert to another religion. Out of the 50,000 people who have fled their residences, as reported by the [Press Trust of India](#), 35,000 are said to belong to Christian tribal communities.

Meitei Christians and Kuki and Naga Christians have lost their places of worship, their livelihoods, and their land. The basic rights to freedom of worship and assembly have been directly impacted by the displacement, and the resources required to rebuild churches and reestablish safe facilities to freely conduct Christian services will be significant.

While it cannot at this stage be established that the targeting of Christians accounts for all of the reasons for the conflict and as an explanation for the extent of the crisis in Manipur, some of those contributing to this report are of the opinion that Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which India ratified on 9 July 1993, has been breached by the failure of the state and national government to intervene to quickly resolve the situation which has severely impacted Christians.

It is hoped that through greater access being given to survivors at legal aid camps that are being established in Manipur, the interviews will be able to shed more light on the specific violations to individuals’ rights to freedom of religion or belief.

ANNEX 3: Evidence supplied by a Legal Expert in India

A human rights lawyer practicing in constitutional courts in India provided legal analysis. He travelled to Manipur in May 2023 to interview survivors and gather firsthand witness testimonies. He wishes to remain anonymous for safety considerations.

This evidence is being provided to detail what is currently before the Supreme Court in India right now, and where the courts have been lacking. I will also address some of the areas that need to be considered legally now that the Manipur crisis has been escalated to the Supreme Court.

Many petitions have been filed before the Supreme Court in India about the Manipur crisis, addressing a wide range of matters. The following comprised the relief sought in the legal petitions:

1. Legal challenges to the decision of the High Court of Manipur's Order of 2 March 2023. On 2 March 2023, the High Court had directed the Manipur State Government to consider granting the Meitei people 'Scheduled Tribe' status under the Indian Constitution. The court recommended this to the Union Government.
2. Following the outbreak of the clashes in early May 2023, petitioners asked the court for a range of Directions, including for central forces to be deployed for the protection of churches and other places of worship, and for compensation to be granted to the victims whose buildings had been damaged in the violence.
3. Petitioners moreover sought the creation of a special investigation team to look into the cause of the violence and provide relief for the victims. Some of these petitioners also sought protection and evacuation from the villages where the attacks were more likely to happen.

To most of these petitions, the Manipur Government responded to confirm that it will defer the implementation of the 2 March 2023 Order granted by the High Court by one year.

As regards to the humanitarian situation, the court reported that the State Government has opened 318 relief camps, and that 47,914 people have been provided relief in these camps. It also reported that security measures had been put in place to protect life, property, and religious places; and that an additional 46,298 people who were stranded had been assisted.

Nevertheless, reports keep coming in about fresh pockets of violence in Manipur. Due to the internet and broadband being down in the region, it is difficult to understand exactly the scale of the ongoing violence and what is happening on the ground.

The courts have a responsibility to do more to address the crisis.

The Honourable Supreme Court has been careful in the wording of its Orders and Directions to the government's concerns and has stated that it intends not to fuel further violence through its Orders. The Court has decided to focus on the humanitarian angle of the violence.

Whilst the approach of the Court is commendable, there are matters that it ought to consider further. First, the Supreme Court ought to direct the Union and the State Government to be more intentional about maintaining law and order, because the issues are only occurring in the State of Manipur. It is important for the State of Manipur to recognize that it is not geographically one of the largest Indian States, and it is therefore reasonable to expect it to act decisively to prevent further violence and restore peace.

Second, it is important to raise awareness about the complete state of lockdown in Manipur, which prevents relief workers and members of the media from being given the entry that is necessary to understand the scale and severity of the situation on the ground.

Third, the vast amount of lost life and property needs to be accounted for. Much wealth and resources that has accumulated over generations for people in Manipur has been destroyed in a number of hours. The survivors need urgent legal assistance, and legal aid workers need access into the State to help, as well as internet access to make the necessary arrangements to relocate people or provide relief. Due to the shutdown of the internet, I had to personally visit Manipur for effective client briefings. Due to the curfew in the state, I was unable to access some of the locations that I had intended to go to assist with legal action

It is important to note that following a previous violent clash in Orissa, Kandhamal in 2008, many compensation claims are still pending in the courts to this day. This former crisis ought to provide a lesson for us with the Manipur crisis, that if the courts do not act quickly, it will be very difficult to compute losses and account for restoration in future years. Legal advocacy groups have been calling for the court or the government to set up Judicial Commission of Inquiry to be established immediately to ensure that Manipur survivors can be rehabilitated swiftly.

ANNEX 4: Additional evidence supplied by the Experts

1. Open Doors UK & Ireland

The systematic and coordinated violence against Christians in Manipur state is deeply disturbing. Although framed as an ethnic dispute which has escalated, there is clearly a strong religious dimension, in which Christians are being targeted in order to be driven from their homes and land.

Vishnu Reddy*, a partner of Open Doors in the region says the ethno-religious hostility has been stoked by the growth of 'Hindutva' nationalism.

"Like so much mob violence directed towards non-Hindu minorities, this has been fuelled from outside the region," he said. "Members of the Hindu nationalist RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] group have been trying to radicalise the Meitei for many years now."

Alongside the destruction of hundreds of church buildings, Christian homes and entire villages have also been destroyed. With many killed and injured and thousands displaced, victims of violence continue to be in a desperate situation. There is an increasing number of tribal Christians fleeing the area – including local Open Doors partners – with many currently taking refuge in

neighbouring towns. More than 10,000 Christians are taking refuge in rescue camps set up by the army, and there are reports of many hiding in the forest areas surrounding Manipur.

“People are taking shelter, afraid to return home ... That is, if their home hasn’t already been destroyed,” said one Kuki tribal Christian, Neha*.

Open Doors local partner Ngai Elam* said: “The Meitei’s continue to attack and shoot each day to terrorise the tribal groups ... Women and girls are sexually harassed and abused, men over 18 are trained with weapons by insurgent groups. The only safe places for the tribal people are refugee camps.”

Open Doors partners have reported that the Hindutva group Arambai Tenggol are looting the homes and properties abandoned by Christians who have fled the violence. There are concerns that the Meitei groups are supported by state forces, and that the president’s ‘shoot at sight’ order (as defined in the Criminal Procedure Code), is exacerbating the violence.

The attackers are very well armed. Kuki Christian Muan Samte* says: “The Meitei mob come in groups of hundreds with sophisticated weapons, they shoot us and even throw [mortar] bombs at us.”

Although the attackers are Meitei people inspired by the Hindutva ideology, it is notable that Christians from both the Meitei and Kuki groups have been targeted, with many Christian Meitei’s facing extreme pressure to renounce their faith and accept Hinduism by Arambai Tenggol. Forced conversion takes place via “Ghar Wapsi,” ceremonies. Open Doors local partners report that the Arambai Tenggol group is actively searching for Christian leaders and pastors in order to kill them.

Local Open Doors partner Yohan Murray* has said: “The pro-Hindutva government has not taken any measures to stop the violence, though on the orders of the Supreme Court, military has been deployed to maintain peace and order. There has been no initiative from the pro-Hindu led state and central government.”

Another local Open Doors partner Vishnu* explains that: “The fundamental reason for the escalation of violence was that the tribals, who are predominantly Christian, are being evicted [by the local government] from the forest land where they’ve resided for hundreds of years.” He also reports that Christians have been especially targeted, and that in many areas “Almost all the churches have been burned down and reduced to ashes.”

This is much more than an ethnic clash. Manipur is known for its large Christian population and strong church groups. This incident demonstrates how vulnerable Christians are in India. In most states Christians are small minorities, and if Christians can be targeted with impunity like this in a state like Manipur, there are grave concerns for their safety and welfare in other states.

Christians in Manipur are expected to face more persecution through forced conversion, physical violence and loss of life. There are also threats of spreading violence in Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya, & Arunachal state. Mass rallies have been held in Meghalaya, Assam by the Meitei. Decade long tensions have escalated and been co-opted by groups propagating Hindutva ideology.

** Names changed to protect the identity of victims*

9 June 2023

2. The South Asia Forum for Freedom of Religion or Belief

South Asia Forum for Freedom of Religion or Belief (SAFFoRB) is a regional human rights network to protect and promote Freedom of Religion or Belief for everyone. SAFFoRB urges Government of India to stop the violence in Manipur

The South Asia Forum for Freedom of Religion or Belief (SAFFoRB) is deeply distressed and concerned about the sudden eruption of violence in Manipur. Fifty people are reported to have been killed, many of the places of worship including several Churches are attacked and burnt down. Unless the violence is stopped immediately and guilty are booked, the peace and harmony in the State will be ruptured beyond repair.

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It must be noted that both Meiteis and tribals have lived together in Manipur for centuries. These communities have been living as neighbours and have shared social and cultural spaces. What was a protest against the government policy turned into a sectarian and barbaric violence, causing deaths, destructions and rendering thousands homeless overnight on both sides.

The state government's alleged inaction has allowed deaths and destruction to escalate. Partisan partisan political interest has fuelled the violence spiral to cause severe loss of human life and property. Clearly the State failed to curb the violence sooner and maintain law and order and peace. Had it acted promptly and strongly, the damage would have been limited.

However, what is very heartening is that there are signs of sanity manifesting in acts of humanity and solidarity. In Lamka town a video of the tribal women holding hands and forming a chain to protect the Meitei community against an angry mob was seen. In Churachandpur, tribal villagers were protecting the Meitei community in their localities in taking them to the army who could escort them to safety.

We urge the Government of India to intervene to stop the violence immediately. They should give protection to all the people and take stringent action against those who are indulging in violence. The places of worship of all faith communities should be protected. We urge the state government should facilitate dialogues among all stakeholders on policy issues instead of supporting one

community against others. The state government should function in an unbiased way in order to restore the traditional harmony and co-existence in the State.

8th May, 2023.

3. David Campanale, Independent Journalist, Member of the IRFBA Council of Experts

In the process of reporting the crisis in Manipur for radio, I recorded the following statements that I consider to be a reliable reflection of events by eyewitnesses in Manipur and others in India:

“The destruction is massive. I mean, something like this has not happened in a targeted way against the Christians of that area. These are people who are already Christians. But it's identity of them as Christians and their worship places that are being targeted. We're hearing from our pastors as to how they're living and what they're doing, staying in shelters, crowded shelters, and looking at all the buildings that has been burned to the ground. And so as they look to the future, and as they are displaced, where do they go? And what do they do?”

- President of the All India Christian Council, Bishop Joseph D'Souza, claiming 36,655 people had been displaced and 1,700 houses and churches had been burned down, Premier Christian Radio, UK, 12 May 2023

“In that fateful night, on May 3, they were praying in their house, they were staying in the church, Pastor quarters, and then there was a big bang on their gate. And as he went out and see some people, many the crowd and were just coming and ransacked the church. And then they begin to burn the church. And slowly they were burned, they managed to escape from the church campus. And they burned down the church and completely ransack.”

- Thangminlun Vaiphei, Asia Antioch Seminary, Assam, Premier Christian Radio, UK, 10 May 2023

“I was there, when the violence started, on May 3rd third of this year. In fact, it was not so far from where I live. On that day all the tribal Students Union of Manipur, that organise a peace rally to express their concerns about their identity, their land, their culture, and their future. And of course, it was also the day for people to pray. So the violence began from there. And within the first three nights, and three days, most of the tribal people, religious churches, institutions, including both those in the capital city of Manipur, Imphal, were burned down. I was scared. And many people had lost their life. So it was something that we have never experienced before”.

- ‘Mang’, Kuki Christian leader, Premier Christian Radio, UK, 25 May 2023

“They were very, very angry. Very, very angry. I've never seen, you know, such intense anger actually... Many of my cousins my uncles and my aunts were living in Imphal. For decades, they've been in Imphal. They've been in the capital. On the night of the Third of May, their homes were completely attacked and burnt down. You know, they've even taken the doors off my uncle's home in Imphal, and they all had to flee. Speaking to some relatives earlier, and they were telling me that the village next to them was completely burnt down. Even last night. 100 homes were burnt down. So we are receiving more and more displaced people. Every, every, every day in our district”

- 'Kim', School teacher and Kuki,
Premier Christian Radio, UK, 30 May 2023

"We have no help. We are helpless with this, this huge military forces, we have no help. We are helpless. Christians should come forward, speak for us and help us. I've seen my own eyes. And I've seen how people fled from their homes. Many of my relatives have spent days and nights of fleeing from their homes, spending nights and days in the jungle and returning to a safer place. When churches burn, hope is gone. There's no place to get consolation, there is no place to get encouragement, and there is no place to get hope. So therefore church is so important to the people. Therefore, burning of the churches must be stopped."

- 'Mang', Manipur Kuki Christian leader,
Premier Christian Radio, UK, 6 June 2023

"What we are also seeing is a very, almost a very strategic attack on churches. The churches are central to the tribal life here in Manipur. Our social life revolves around our churches, which is not just for spiritual well-being, but also forms a very important social institution for our communities. They're seen as a very prominent symbol of our tribal identity, which is Christian and therefore, they're being targeted and attacked. And it's unfortunate that this violence is continuing unabated... events since 3 May are pre-planned, with systematic plans to attack our churches, to take away our land, and also to make us internally displaced in our own state. Because at some stage, their ethnic identity either as Hindus or as non-Christians, and as belonging to a particular ethnicity, supersedes their professional identity of being policemen".

- Golan Naulak, Spokesperson for the Zomi Students
Federation in Manipur,
Premier Christian Radio, UK, 14 June 2023

Whilst I cannot independently verify the following accounts because the internet has been deliberately switched off in Manipur. However, the next account was with a grandmother interviewed by a media team from Zomi Student's Federation, a tribal group, recorded here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=UADlcoheNL8>

"The Meiteis bludgeoned both my elder brother and his youngest son to death. After this, they disrobed both my elder brother's daughter and the wife of our village elder and paraded them naked. Then they raped them both and released them afterwards. But as for my husband and children they targeted my husband with an axe. On seeing this, two of my children rushed towards my husband and tackled him to a ditch to shield him with their own bodies and pleaded for the men not to kill their father."

- This audio is from an interview with a Vaiphei family from B. Phainom village of Kangpokpi district, Manipur on what they experienced on the 3rd and 4th of May, 2023.

"It's quite traumatising...we were on our knees hugging each other and bleeding from head to toe. We prayed that we would not die in hate, and my wife quote Psalm 68 from the Bible. We heard men and women trying to protect us from the mob who had drunk alcohol and we could smell it. We were told that the mob were out to get the illegal immigrants from Myanmar. That night they broke the windows in the community hall where we were....a woman was crying at the window asking us to forgive her as she said the violence did not represent who they were."

- Manggoulal, Manipur Violence Victim, 16 May 2023

I have also been sent the following accounts that have been uploaded to the internet, that may inform members on wider perspectives. The links are provided:

- [‘They hit us any way they could’](#): Manipur violence survivor recalls horror, escape’ – 2 June 2023
- [IDs checked, skull cracked, ‘dumped alive’ in mortuary](#) — 3 Kuki survivors recount Manipur mob horror – 1 June 2023
- [Agnes Neikhohat telling her survival story](#) – 23 May 2023
- [Pi Thafamkim and sons, victims of the atrocities against the tribals in Manipur](#). Husband Killed – 1 June 2023
- [Manipur violence: Untold story of a survivor](#) – 16 May 2023
- [‘Faith in god, not govt’](#): Manipur survivors in Delhi say they were ‘forced to leave’ their homes – 19 May 2023
- [Victims of Violence in Manipur Recount the Horrors](#) - The Quint – 8 May 2023
- [Manipur violence: Refugees at relief camps narrate ordeal](#). express worry over family well-being ANI - 6 May 2023
- [Manipur Violence: Eyewitness Accounts](#) - Students of Manipur University Tell Their Stories on News18 – 16 May 2023
- [Survivors' stories: "...they paraded them naked"](#)- B Phainom village, Kangpokpi district, Manipur – 15 May 2023
- [The Onset of Meitei Atrocity](#): An Account from Kangvai – 1 June 2023
- [No home to return to: Manipur violence survivors](#) - The Times of India - 13 May 2023
- [Survivors of Manipur violence recount shocking stories](#) – Matters India - 21 May 2023
- [‘We Left Home on May 3 and Ran to the Hills’](#): A Manipur Violence Survivor's First Person Account – The Wire - 9 May 2023
- [Manipur riot survivors recount nightmarish ordeal](#) -15 May 2023
- [Teacher tracing her roots to Manipur speaks up on the strife](#) – Telegraph India – 9 May 2023
- [4 women from Ukhrul attacked by mob in Imphal](#) – Ukhurl Times – 24 May 2023
- [Narrowly escaped: Victims of Manipur violence share their ordeal](#) – 16 May 2023
- [“Can’t Go Back Home Now”](#) - Anguished voices Inside A Manipur Refugee Camp - Mojo Ground Report – 23 May 2023

14 June 2023

ANNEX 5: Photographic evidence supplied by a local journalist personally known to a member of the Council of Experts to IRFBA.

Kyamgei Church, Imphal West



EFCI Church Lamphel



Survivors in Churachandpur



A tribal church in Bishnupur District



Tabernacle Baptist Church, Salungpham



Imphal 1



Imphal 3



Imphal 2



Imphal 4



Imphal Camp



Graffiti 1



Graffiti 2

