



Pan-Tribal Confederacy of Indigenous Tribal Nations

The Only Multi-Racial Worldwide Indigenous Confederacy In Existence

Update - Arrest of victims of evictions at Lamphelpat Wetlands, Manipur, NE India

Friday, June 17, 2011

Dear Friends,

I would like to update on the eviction case at Lamphelpat Wetlands Manipur. Its confirmed now that there are already arrest of eight people, all women. They are arrested by the Lamphel Police Station, Imphal West District, Manipur. There are also two kids along with two of the women arrested. We are yet to confirm if any cases are filed against them. They are all residents of Yaipha Leikai, Lamphelpat. They had been taking shelter in temporary shed made of plastic, turpuline sheet and some tin and some wooden sheet as floor over a small canal in between the Game village road and the wall of Election Office. I am pleased to attach some of pictures of the affected communities after eviction and also the site of eviction.

Ms. Maibam Nganbi (70)

Ms. Huirem Tombisana (48)

Ms. Sagolshem Shakhi (77)

Ms. Konthoujam Ashangbi (65)

Ms. Tongbram Bimola (48)

Ms. Kongthoujam Ibemcha (35) with her one year old daughter (K. I bemtombi)

Ms. Sagolshem Memicha (34) with her two year old son (Sanathoi)

Ms. Wangkhem Jamini (47)

Best wishes, Jiten Yumnam

Secretary, Forum for Indigenous Perspectives and Action,

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URGENT SOLIDARITY APPEAL FOR VICTIMS OF EVICTION OF 15 FAMILIES FROM LAMPHEL PAT WETLANDS IN MANIPUR, NE INDIA ON 6 JUNE 2011

Date of Incident: 6 June 2011 at around 7 A.M

Place of Incident: Yaipha Leikai, Lamphelpat, Under Lamshang Assembly Constituency, Imphal West District, Manipur, India

Victims/Community Affected: 15 Households, 81 persons belonging to the Meitei People of Manipur

The displaced victims are mostly women, children and elderly people

Event Description:

On 6 June 2011, at least fifteen (15) houses of Yaipha Leikai village, Lamphelpat Wetland near Employment Exchange, Imphal West District, Manipur in India's North East had been destroyed by Manipur Police from the Lamphel Police Station under the orders of the Government of Manipur on 6 June 2011 as a means to evict the villagers to make way for the Government plan for building the National Institute of Technology (NIT) complex and a water body at Lamphelpat wetlands.

Prior to the eviction, an order issued by the Sub Divisional Officer, Lamphel, Imphal West on 3 June 2011 was served to the villagers of Yaipha Leikai only on Sunday, the 5 June, 2011 around 10 a.m in the morning asking them to dismantle their houses the same day before 5 in the evening. The villagers were completely taken by surprise as most of the senior household occupants were off to work in Lamphelpat Wetlands for fishing and many went out to earn as daily laborers. The eviction drive was carried out on 6 June 2011, the next day from around 7 a.m in the morning. The eviction process was overseen by State Works minister K Ranjit, PDA chairman Kh Loken among other officials of different departments and police officials of Lamphel Police Station, Imphal West District. The eviction was carried out by using earthmovers and other heavy machineries despite the angst of the residents, who have resided in the area for more than four decade.

The eviction has led to widespread suffering among the affected villagers. Elderly women, women and children, more particularly suffer severe inconveniences due to destruction of their shelter and incessant rains during and after the evictions. The affected villagers also suffer shortage of food and health complications as they continue to seek temporary shelter in makeshift camps near the wetlands.

No Free, Prior and Informed Consent of the displaced community was taken up for the project envisaged in the wetland nor has timely information been furnished to them prior to the eviction. The eviction process lacks any comprehensive rehabilitation and resettlement plan for the affected villagers. The eviction process fails to respect any of the provisions for respecting human rights under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples etc.

On the sideline of the eviction process, the Manipur State Public Works Department Minister, K Ranjit termed the affected villagers as encroacher on the wetlands and opined that eviction notice was served to the community about a year back, another second notice had been served some six months back to evict the village to make way for construction of the National Information of Technology (NIT) and for a water body. However the residents refused to acknowledge the government order as there is no plan for their rehabilitation and resettlement and moreover, the villagers of Yaipha Leikai village depend on the wetlands for their basic livelihood and survival.

Residents of Lamphel Yaipha Leikai, near the Employment Exchange office, staged sit-in-protest against the eviction drive launched by the Government on 6 June. Speaking to some newsmen at the protest site, 70-year old Ms. M Nganbi claimed that the locals of Yaipha Leikai, Lamphelpat spotted an eviction notice pasted at an electric pole near their locality on 5 June around noon time directing them to dismantle their houses and to move away within 5 pm of the same day. As most of the residents had gone for work the instruction could not be promptly complied with, she conceded and added that at about 7 am the next day, on 6th June, all 15 houses

were dismantled by an earth mover JCB machine. Police Personnel from Lamphel Police Station and several personnel of the Village Defence Force (VDF) were also deployed in the eviction process which also prevents the villagers from salvaging any of their household items. All items, rooftop tins, furnitures, woods, utensils were all taken away by the police and their granaries were emptied. Several of the reared poultry, ducks and hens were killed.

PDA chairman Kh Loken informed the community and media persons present at the time of eviction that the Lamphelpat area has serious drainage problems, during the wet seasons, most of the roads and waterways are flooded and hence requires urgent action in the general interest of the public and to protect the environment. However, he did not mention the causes of such flooding and water logging, the construction of Barrage at Samushang by the Government of Manipur which disturbs the natural water drainage and management between Nambul River and Lamphelpat Wetlands and other construction projects which has already clogged the wetlands ecosystem and its natural water management systems. The constructions includes the Langol Housing Complex, the Deputy Commissioners Complex, Employment Exchange, Election Commissions office, the National Games Village, the Sewerage Waste Treatment Plant, Central Agricultural University and its various infrastructures, various Government housing complex etc.

Affected villagers also contended that apart from the destruction caused to their homes, security force personnel who accompanied the eviction team took away household goods and construction materials. Condemning the sudden eviction drive as inhuman, evicted villagers also conveyed that the eviction drive effected livelihood of more than 70 persons.

During an inspection visit by the Chief Minister of Manipur on 24 May 2011 at Lamphelpat in connection with construction of National Information Technology complex as well as preservation of the Lamphelpat water body, Okram Ibobi gestured to officials accompanying him to launch eviction drive against illegal occupants at the earliest.

There is huge inconsistency with the move to protect the Lamphelpat wetlands in Manipur, while the most impoverished and marginalized communities who depend on the Lamphelpat wetlands immediately for their survival are targeted to evictions and displacement, several structures created at the behest of the government which actually destroys the wetlands ecosystems are spared. There is no comprehensive wetlands development plan and policy in Manipur. Wetlands are indiscriminately targeted for mega development interventions without any clear cut policies. The Loktak Wetlands ecosystems had already been destroyed by the Loktak Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project, which was commissioned in 1984 by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation. Several thousand residents in and around the wetlands are displaced by the Loktak Project. The Loktak Protection Act, 2007 further threatens to evict all indigenous peoples depending on the Loktak Wetlands for fishing, gathering and for other means of survival.

Specific demands of the residents of Yaipha Leikai at Lamphelpat, Imphal West Manipur

- a) Revoke the eviction order and allow the evicted villagers to return and settle in their original site of settlement at Yaipha Leikai, Lamphelpat.
- b) Provide rehabilitation and resettlement of the evicted families from Lamphelpat for construction of National Information and Technology and Water Body
- c) Stop all forms of evictions targetting indigenous peoples in the name of development
- d) Take the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of indigenous peoples before introducing any development processes in Manipur.

PLEASE SEND YOUR LETTERS BY FAX OR EMAIL TO:

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News clippings on lamphelpat evictions

Land encroachers evicted to make way for NIT and water park at Lamphelpat

Source: The Imphal Free Press, The June 7, 2011

Website: www.ifp.co.in

IMPHAL June 6: At least 17 houses of Lamphelpat 'A' village have been destroyed as a means to evict the occupants today so as to make way for the government plan of building the NIT complex and a water body. The eviction drive was carried out today under the instruction of the state government following plans to developing a water body and further to build the NIT complex which will comprise of at least a 100 acres.

The eviction process was overseen by works minister K Ranjit, PDA chairman Kh Loken among other officials of different departments and police officials.

On the sideline of the eviction process K Ranjit stated that it is a sorry plight that the houses have to be bulldozed, but an eviction notice was served to the encroachers about a year back, another second notice had been served some six months back, however the residents refused to acknowledge the government order.

As the matter has to be addressed sooner or later and as the government has plans to develop the area for the future benefits of the public, we appeal the evicted persons to bear with us, he said.

PDA chairman Kh Loken also added that the Lamphelpat area has serious drainage problems, during the wet seasons, most of the roads and canals are flooded and we need to act in the general interest of the public, we also need to protect the environment, he said.

The eviction was carried out by using earthmovers despite the angst of the residents, who have resided in the area for more than a decade. This is the second such eviction process taking place at Lamphelpat area.

Lamphel residents protest eviction drive

The Sangai Express, the 9th June 2011

IMPHAL, Jun 8: Residents of Lamphel Yaipha Leikai, near the Employment Exchange office, today staged sit-in-protest against the recent eviction drive launched by the Government.

Speaking to some newsmen at the protest site, 70-year old M Nganbi claimed that the locals on June 5 spotted an eviction notice pasted at an electric pole directing Lamphel Yaipha Leikai residents to dismantle houses and move away within 5 pm of the same day.

As most of the residents had gone for work the instruction could not be promptly complied with, she conceded and added that at about 7 am the next day all 14 houses were dismantled by a JCB.

Other protestors, who also chipped in contended that apart from the destruction caused to their homes, security force personnel who accompanied the eviction team took away household goods and construction materials. Condemning the sudden eviction drive as inhuman, they also conveyed that the eviction drive effected livelihood of more than 70 persons.

It is informed that during a recent inspection visit by the Chief Minister in connection with construction of NIT complex as well as preservation of the Lamphelpat water body O Ibobi Singh gestured to officials accompanying him to launch eviction drive against illegal occupants at the earliest. Questioning on what

condition other neighborhoods were left untouched, the protestors demanded that the State authorities be precise on the land requirement for setting up the NIT or water body.

Silence of Lamsang and Uripok assembly constituencies' MLAs also evoked strong criticism from the protestors.

United NGOs Manipur calls for alternative arrangements for Lamphel evicted families

The Imphal Free Press, 15 June 2011

<http://kanglaonline.com/2011/06/united-ngos-manipur-calls-for-alternative-arrangements-for-lamphel-evicted-families/>

IMPHAL June 14: United NGOs Mission, Manipur has appealed to the Chief Minister and the Governor of the State to make immediate alternative arrangement for the evicted families of Lamphel Yaipha Leikai at the earliest.

A press release of the secretary of the organization U Nobokishore stated that the conditions of the fifteen evicted families are now in a deplorable condition. As the families are left without proper shelter and living in makeshift shelters, the aged persons and the children are suffering from starvation and water borne diseases, the children are also not able to attend school, it maintained.

The press release further thanked the organizations and individuals for partaking in the protest rally and public meeting held on June 12 addressing the escalation of crime against women and children.

Meanwhile sources stated that the makeshift shelters constructed anew along the Lamphel roadside have also been removed by security persons.

Local MLA W Brajabidhu is also reported to have met the evicted families and told them to shift to another adjoining area, but the families have stated that the area is unfeasible as the said place is a marshy area

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