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25 Jul 2023

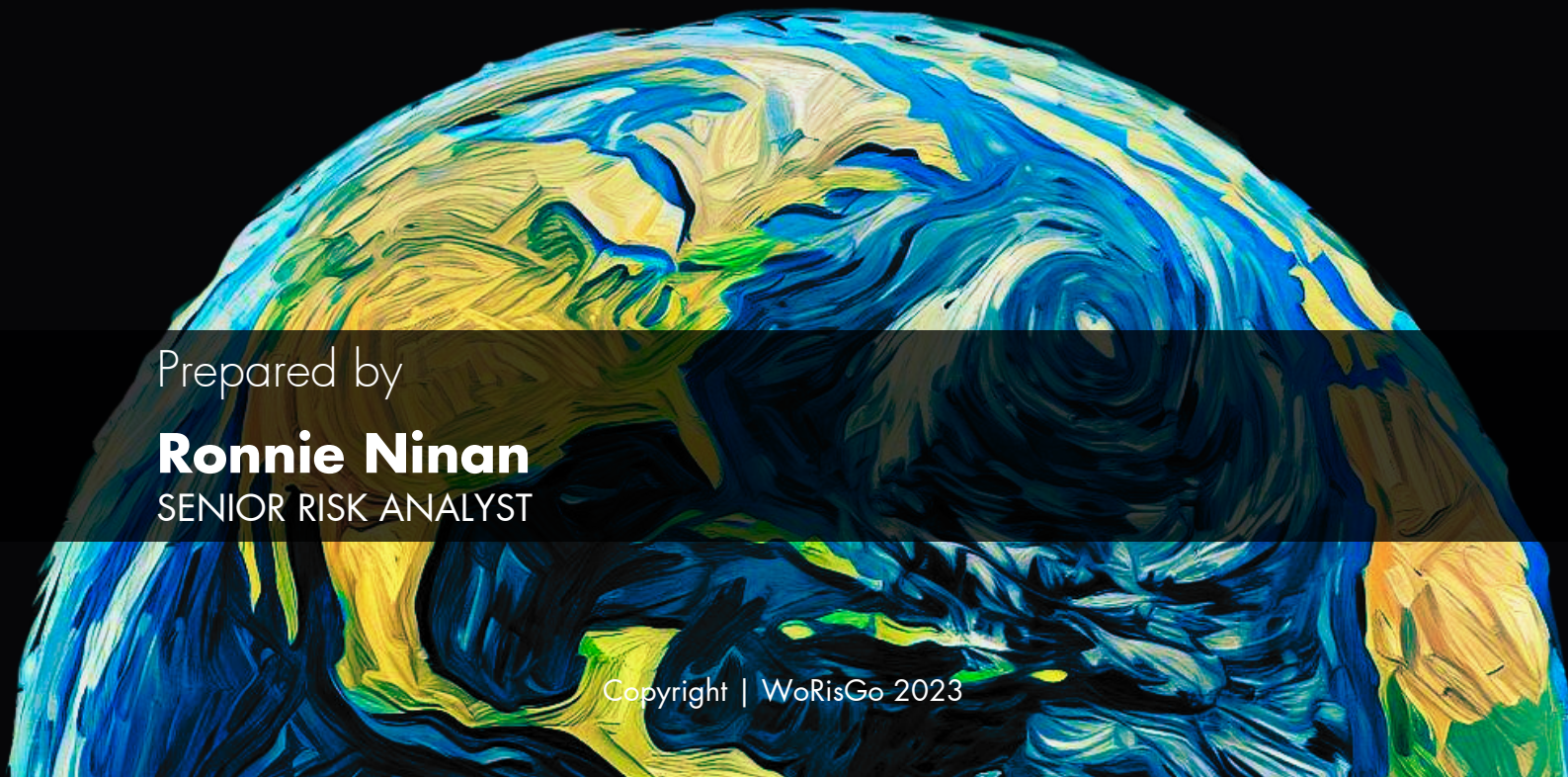
Manipur Violence

CONFLICT watch

Prepared by

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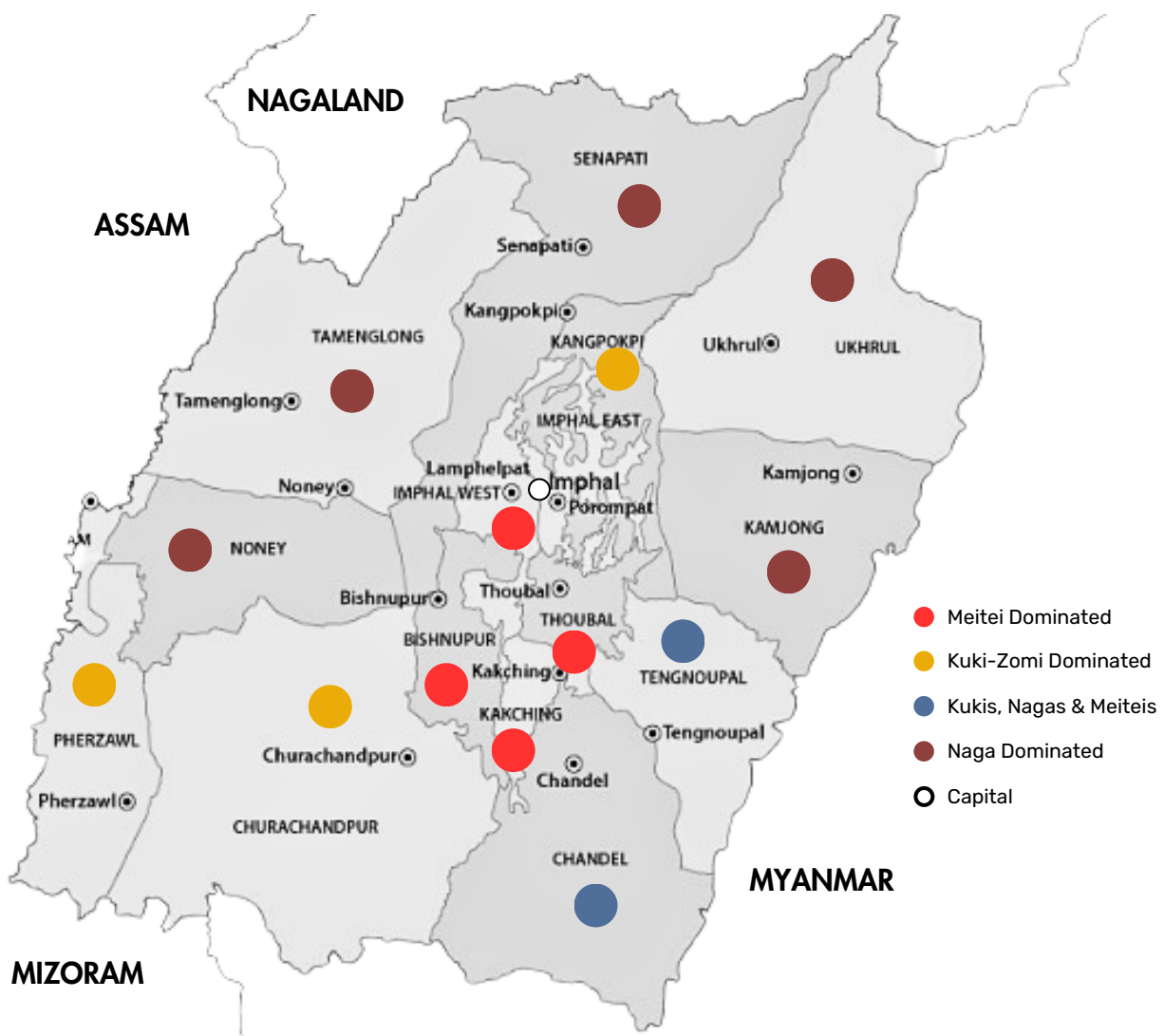


Executive Summary

The socio-political environment in Manipur is currently in a state of turmoil due to escalating tensions between the Kuki-Zo, Naga tribal groups, and the majority Meitei community. The conflict, which ignited in late March and escalated dramatically on 03 May, is deeply rooted in the potential inclusion of the Meitei community in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list. This development has sparked fear among the smaller tribal communities of losing their constitutional safeguards. The situation has resulted in significant casualties, displacement of residents, extensive property damage, and disruptions to essential supplies.

Map of Manipur

Dominant groups



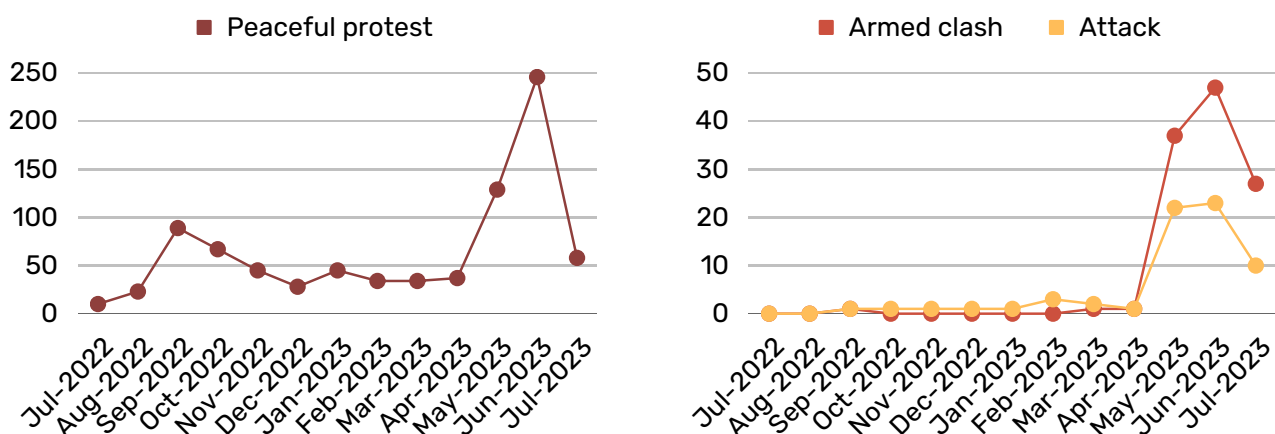
Background

Manipur, a northeastern Indian state, is positioned to the east of Bangladesh and borders Myanmar. With approximately 3.3 million residents, the state's ethnic diversity is marked by the dominance of Meiteis (over half the population) and significant minorities like Kukis and Nagas (43%).

Causes of Unrest:

- **Tribal Status Dispute:** The Meiteis' pursuit of official tribal status is a significant trigger for the current unrest. Opposition from Kukis stems from concerns over potential increases in Meitei influence and possible encroachment into Kuki territories.
- **Drug War Controversy:** The Meitei-led government's anti-drug campaign is seen by Kukis as an attempt to displace their communities, deepening the divide between the two groups.
- **Illegal Migration:** The influx of migrants from Myanmar has escalated tensions and intensified pressure on land resources.
- **Socioeconomic Factors:** The rising population and high unemployment have propelled many youths towards militia involvement.

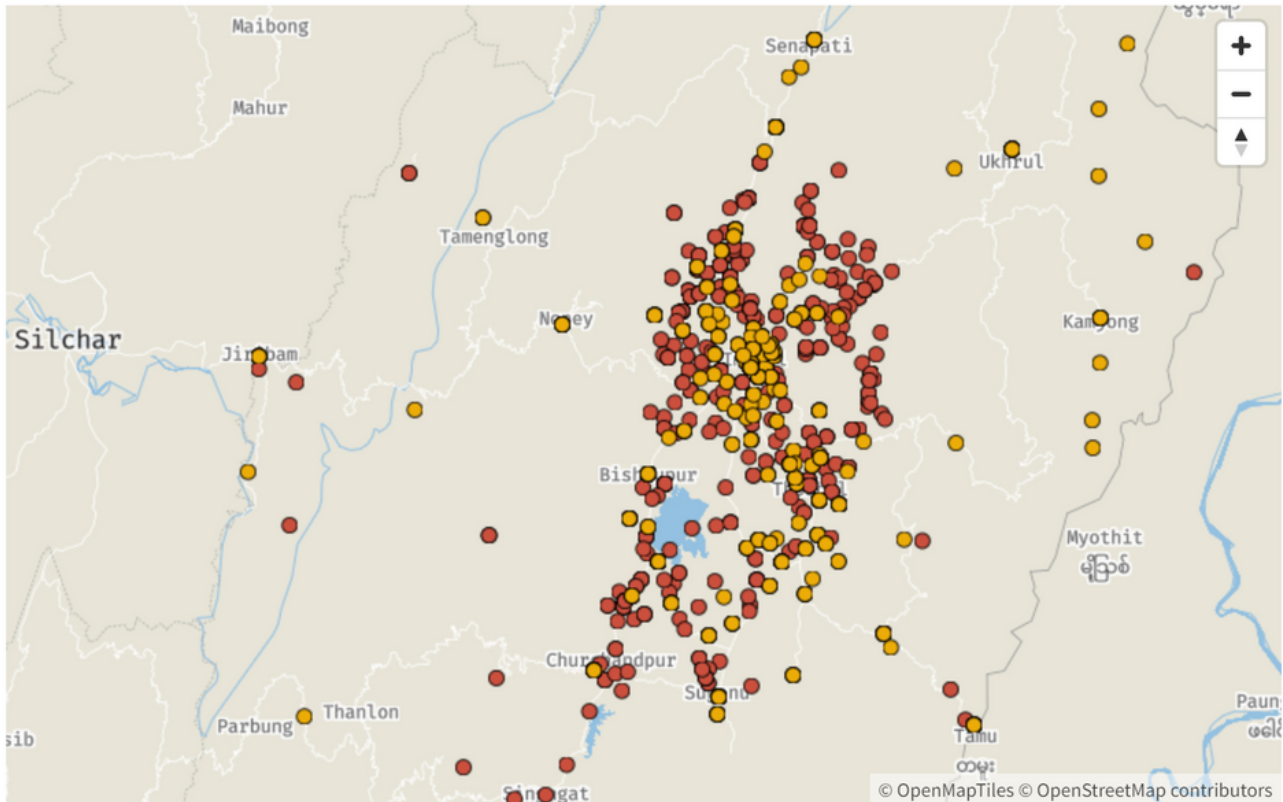
Trigger Point: The key ignition for the recent wave of violence is the potential inclusion of the Meiteis in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list, promising them additional constitutional protections. This situation has led to a volatile and complex state of unrest in Manipur.



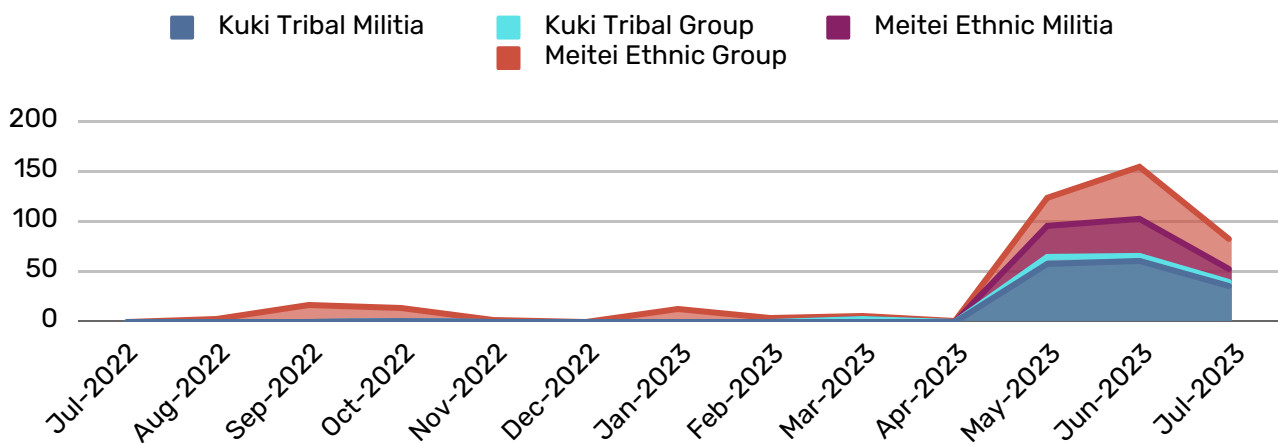
Data on protests, armed clashes between groups, and attacks in Manipur | Source: ACLED

Incidents across Manipur 2022 - 2023

Legend
● 2022
● 2023



Major incidents across Manipur (2022-23) | Varied sources



Data on groups involved in violence in Manipur | Source: ACLED

Manipur Incidents

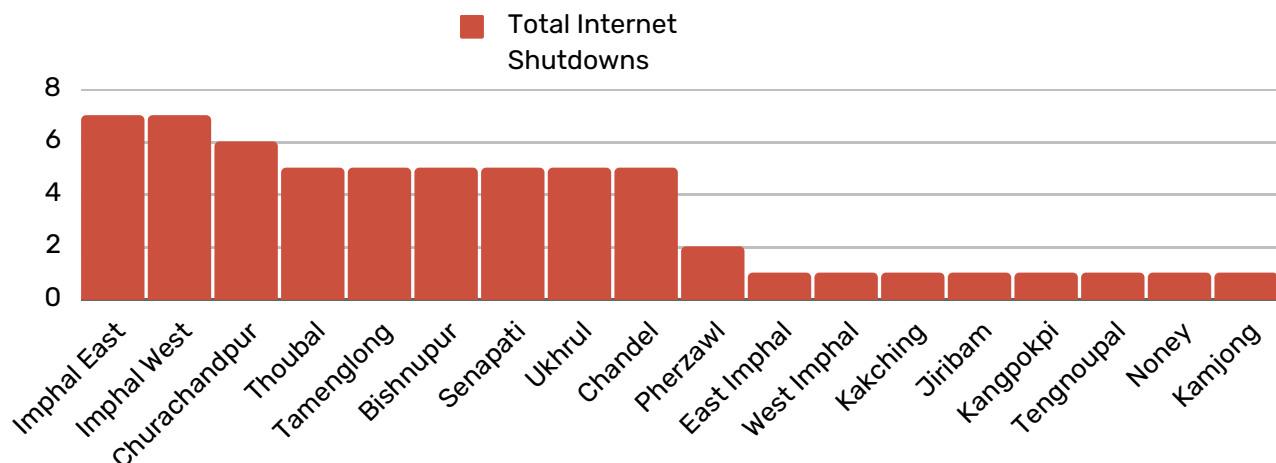
Location-wise heatmap



Heatmap of areas most affected in Manipur (2022-23) | Varied sources

Curfew & Internet shutdowns

As of this report the curfew has been lifted in Imphal West from 0500 hrs to 1800 hrs, except along the Tiddim Road from Keishampat Jn. to Ningthemkol Crossing. While the internet shutdown persists in most areas, the Manipur High Court has called for a phased restoration of Fiber to the Home (FTTH) and leased line internet services. As of 25 Jul, the state administration has responded by lifting the suspension on broadband services, specifically for Internet Leased Line (ILL) and FTTH services. However, the prohibition on mobile internet services remains in place.



Data on internet shutdown district-wise (2023) | Source: Software Freedom Law Centre, India

Areas affected

As of this report

- **Imphal West:** Lamphelpat, Imphal, Lamshang, Kadangband, Haraothel, Kanto, Uripok, Lamdeng, Wangoi, Lairenjam, Singjamei, Malom, Senjam Chirang, Sangaiprou Maning, Patsoi, Sagolband, Khumbong, Maklang, Taothong, Koutruk.
- **Imphal East:** Sawombung, Yaingangpokpi, Porompat, Khonghampat, Pourabi, Keikhu Hao, Leitanpokpi, Keirao Bitra, Chaningpokpi, Yambem, Dewlahland, Achanbigei, Lamlong, Wangkhei, Top Chingtha, Leirongthel, Nung Brung, Chingarel Tejpur, Pukhao Santipur.
- **Thoubal:** Yairipok, Sangaiyumpham, Phundrei, Salungpham, Lilong, Waithou Chiru, Chaobok, Khangabok, Samaram, Wangjing, Heirok, Uyal, Khongjom, Khekman, Athokpam, Sapam, Keirak.
- **Bishnupur:** Moirang, Nambol, Phougakchao Ikhai, Tangjeng, Karang, Nachou, Terakhongshangbi, Phubala, Torbung, Tronglaobi, Moirangkhunou.
- **Kakching:** Sugnu, Kakching Khunou, Wapokpi, Langmeidong, Wangoo, Lamjao, Wabagai.
- **Kangpokpi:** Sadar Hills East, H. Khopibung, Khamenlok, Chanung, Joulen, Chajang, Thingjang, Phailengkot, Chingdai Khullen, Sadar Hills West Kangpokpi, Saitu-Gamphazol Lhanghoi, Kanglatongbi, Mongneljang, Kangchup, Gamgiphai, Saikul, Leimakhong, Molkon, L Songphel, Maphou, Nongdam, K Songlung, Sapormeina, Sipijang, Tumukhong, Moirangpurel, Laikhong, Bongyang, Saichang.
- **Chandel:** Chakpikarong, Aigejang, Serou, Laimanai.
- **Kamjong:** Kamjong-ChassadMollen, Kamjong-ChassadKamjong.
- **Jiribam:** Jiribam, Dibong.
- **Churachandpur:** Churachandpur, Bethel.

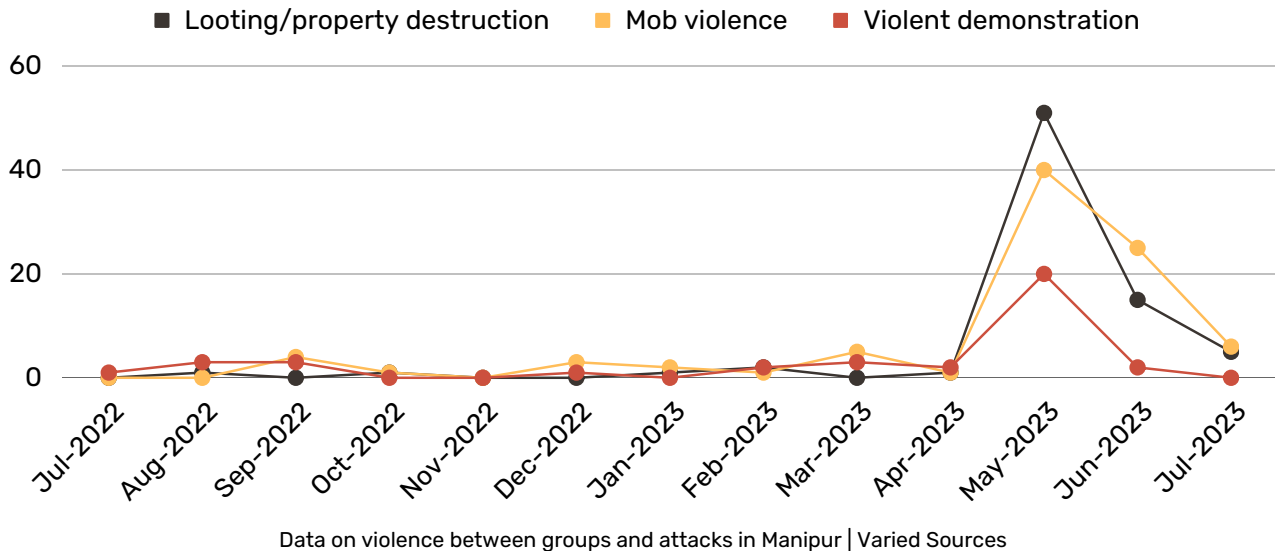
Transit affected

As of this report, the ongoing economic blockade along the National Highway 2 (Bishnupur-Imphal), which remains the lifeline of the state is expected to continue even though a consensus has been reached by the Kuki National Organisation and United People's Front.

Previously other roads affected included:

- The road between Churachandpur and Imphal, at Saikul and Nambol
- The road between Churachandpur and Chandel, at Sugnu
- The road between Imphal and Thoubal, at Lilong
- The road between Bishnupur and Imphal, at Nambol
- The road between Churachandpur and Bishnupur, at Torbung

Train services have partially resumed owing to movement of essential supplies to the state.



Casualties & Displacement

Casualties: According to official figures, nearly 160 individuals have lost their lives in the recent unrest. Unofficial counts suggest higher fatalities.

Displacement: The conflict has displaced over 60,000 people.

- **Mizoram:**
 - About 2,000 individuals have sought refuge in Mizoram. Over 7,527 ethnic Zos (also known as Kukis in Manipur) have migrated to Mizoram.
 - The district of Kolasib in Mizoram has the highest number of displaced people at 2,685. Other districts in Mizoram housing refugees include Aizawl (2,386), Saitual (2,153), Champhai (164), Khawzawl (36), Serchhip (27), Mamit (19), and Lunglei (57).
 - Following an advisory issued by the Peace Accord MNF Returnees' Association (PAMRA), a group of former militants based in Aizawl, the Manipur government has initiated an aerial evacuation of Meiteis.
- **Assam:** Around 1,500 residents from Jiribam and surrounding areas have moved to Cachar in Assam
- **Nagaland:** More than 1,000 individuals from the Naga tribe, residing in the hilly regions of Manipur, have fled to Nagaland. Preferred routes include bus routes and on foot to nearby Naga villages.

Commodities & Disruptions

Pharma disruptions

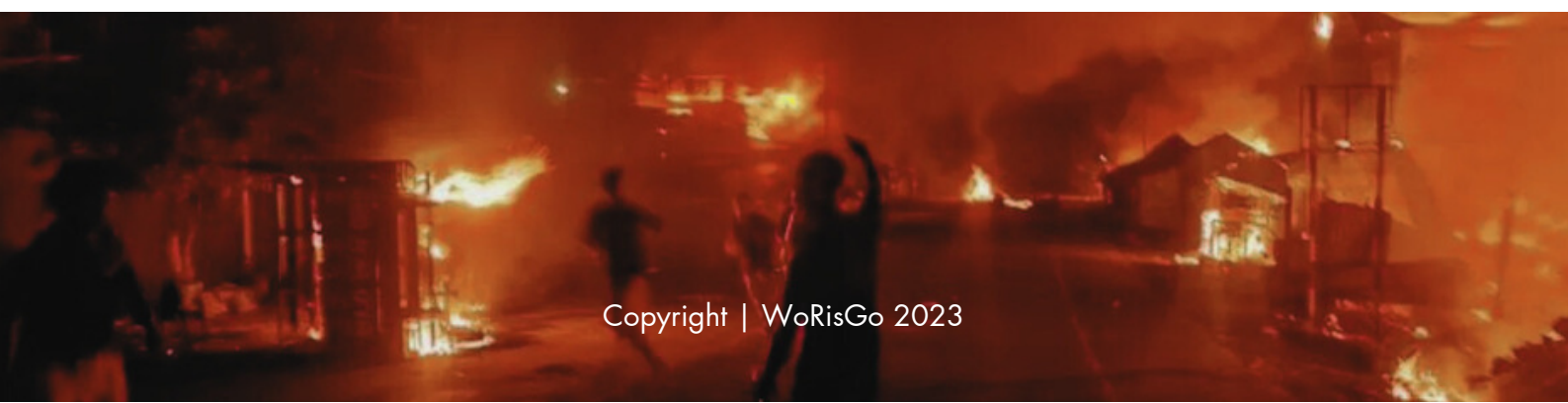
- Manipur's medicine supplies have seen a 30-40% decline due to the ongoing unrest, as per recent reports.
- Distributors report that the supplies of antibiotics, HIV drugs, asthma, and dermatology medicines are most affected.
- Some reveal a decrease in demand for all general medicines. Companies are facing increased transportation costs, ranging from an additional 5% to 30%, due to the need for air transport or taking longer road routes via Silchar.

Essential Commodities

- The availability of essential commodities in Manipur has been severely affected due to the ongoing unrest and violence in the region.
- In response to this crisis, the Northeast Frontier (NF) Railway, in cooperation with Manipur's transport department, has started sending goods trains carrying essential commodities to the violence-hit northeastern state.
- The first of these trains, carrying essential commodities including sugar, potatoes, and other FMCG goods, arrived on 24 Jul at Khongsang railway station in Manipur's Tamenglong district.

The ongoing unrest in Manipur has led to a significant increase in the prices of essential commodities, mentioned below (as per available reports):

- Petrol prices have increased by approximately 80-100% in the black market, with prices reaching Rs 270-300 per litre, between May and Jul 2023.
- Diesel prices have seen a similar increase, rising by 50-100%, during the same period.
- Vegetable prices and rice doubled, representing a 100% increase. This is further expected to increase due to disruptions production.
- Prices of potatoes and onions have increased by approximately 20-30%.
- The price of LPG cylinders in the black market has surged by about 80%.

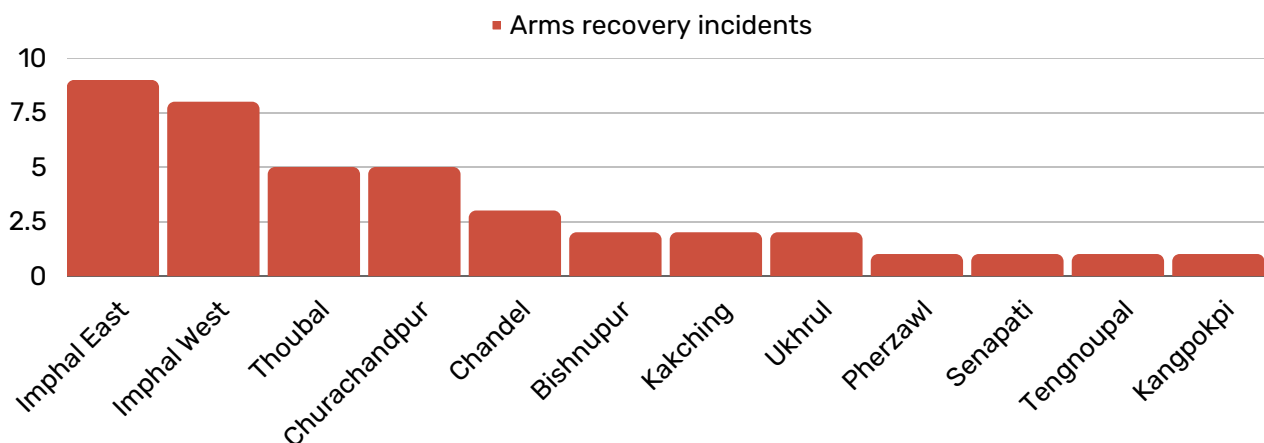


Illegal migration & Arms smuggling

As per government sources, a significant influx of approximately 718 Myanmar nationals was reported in Manipur's Chandel district between 22-23 Jul. The state government has subsequently alerted the Assam Rifles, which is currently deployed in the state, to enforce stringent measures to prevent the entry of any Myanmar nationals lacking valid documentation. This development is particularly noteworthy given the ongoing discourse on illegal migration, a contentious issue that has been a major source of distrust among communities. The influx of Myanmar nationals has been reported across several areas within the state. Specifically, the following regions have reported incidents of illegal migration from Myanmar during the 2 days:

- **Lajang:** 13 individuals reported.
- **Bonse:** 38 individuals reported.
- **New Samtal:** 89 individuals reported.
- **New Lajang:** 230 individuals reported.
- **Yangnomphai:** 143 individuals reported.
- **Yangnomphai Saw Mill:** 175 individuals reported.
- **Aivomjang:** 30 individuals reported.

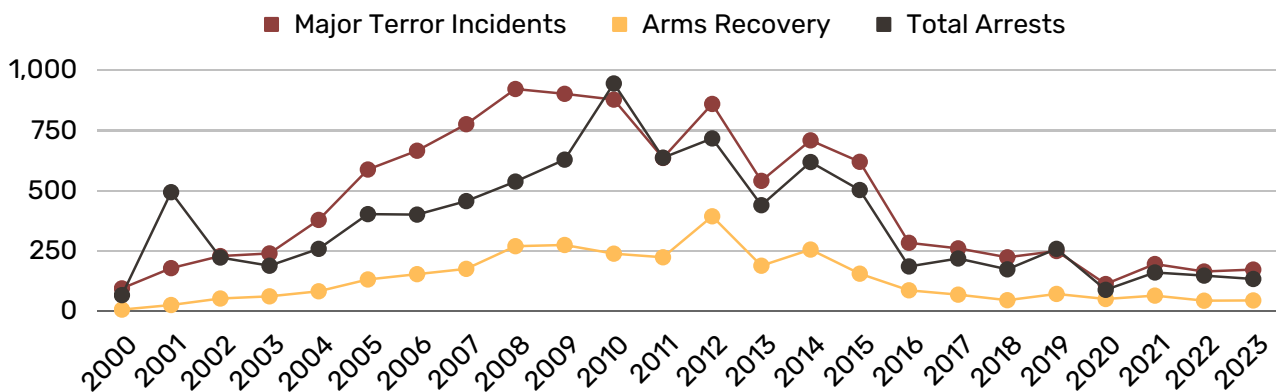
The Manipur government has recovered a significant number of these weapons, but efforts are ongoing to retrieve the remainder. Sources indicate that these arms were smuggled via Myanmar. Active insurgent groups in Manipur reportedly procured a large cache of weapons from the black market near the Myanmar-China border. Assam Police have also issued an alert for potential smuggling of looted arms from Manipur, with an estimated 4,000 weapons stolen. The weapons, including Insas rifles, carbines, LMGs, pistols, AK-47s, .303 rifles, and a large quantity of ammunition, are feared to potentially fall into the hands of insurgents in Assam.



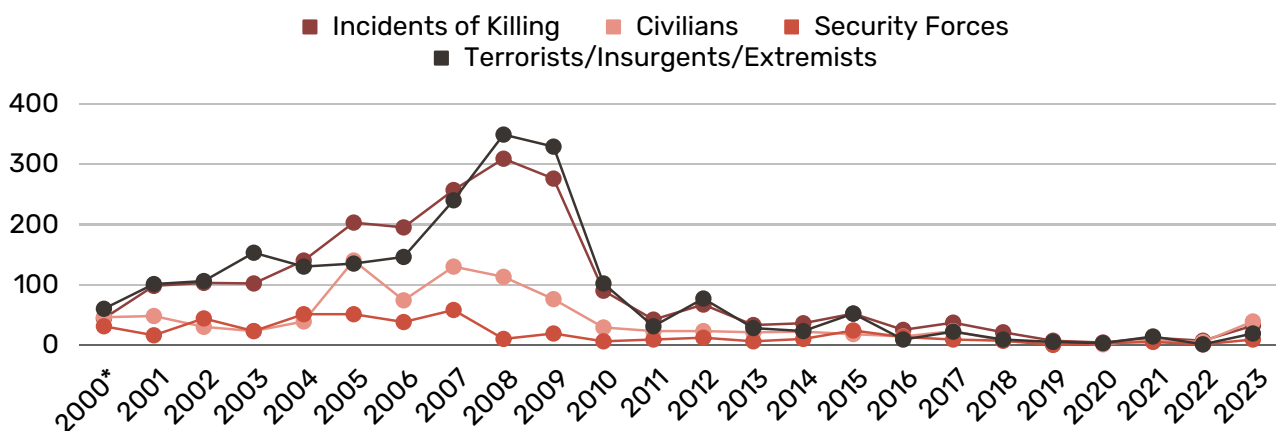
Data on arms recovery between Jan - Jul 2023 in Manipur | Varied sources

Terrorism & Insurgency

Despite considerable progress in curbing militancy in Manipur, challenges persist. Recent unrest has led to sporadic violence, unresolved district boundary disputes, and breached peace agreements. Additionally, the potential return of militants from the India-Myanmar border poses a risk. The continued enforcement of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), excluding the Imphal Municipal area, signifies ongoing security issues. Active insurgent groups, including the officially disbanded Arambai Tenggol (radical Meitei group), contribute to this volatile situation.



Data on major terror incidents across Manipur | Source: SATP



Data on fatalities due to terror incidents across Manipur | Source: SATP

Status	Group Name
Proscribed Terrorist/Extremist Group	Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP)
	United National Liberation Front (UNLF)
	People's Liberation Army (PLA)
	Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL)
	People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK)
	National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Khaplang (NSCN-K)
	Manipur People's Liberation Front (MPLF)
Active Terrorist/Insurgent Group	Coordination Committee (CorCom)
	Hmar People's Convention- Democracy (HPC-D)
	National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM)
	Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF)
	National Revolutionary Front of Manipur (NRFM)
	Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA)
	Kuki National Front (KNF)
	Kuki National Liberation Front (KNLF)

Security measures

As of this report, 40,000 security personnel have been deployed in Manipur. The Ministry of Home Affairs has also sanctioned the deployment of (total 124 companies):

- 57 companies of the Central Reserve Police Force
- 10 units of the Rapid Action Force
- 48 divisions of the Border Security Force
- 4 groups of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police
- 5 contingents of Sashastra Seema Bal

Additionally, the operations jurisdiction of various ranges has undergone a strategic redefinition. In a concurrent move, two more senior officials of Deputy Inspector General rank have been reassigned from Kohima in Nagaland and Silchar in Assam to Manipur, strengthening the supervisory structure in the tumultuous area.

Moves for reconciliation

Government Initiatives

- **Peace Committee:** The Ministry of Home Affairs established a peace committee, including Chief Minister Biren Singh and 50 other members, to facilitate dialogue among various ethnic groups in Manipur.
- **Engagement with Naga Leaders:** The state government initiated discussions with Naga leaders to negotiate with Kuki leaders for a peaceful resolution.

Non-State Actors

- **Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR):** The FNR called for a shared understanding and collective efforts for a peaceful solution, urging the people of Manipur and neighboring communities to foster a "congenial space" for peace.
- **Civil Bodies Team from Nagaland:** A 30-member team visited Manipur, expressing commitment to end violence and offering solidarity to the people of Manipur.
- **Women's Rights Groups:** These groups advocated for peace in Manipur and proposed the establishment of a Northeast India Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- **United Democratic People (UDP):** The UDP appealed to the people of Manipur to exercise restraint and called for effective Central intervention to restore normalcy.
- **Mizoram Solidarity March:** On 25 Jul, thousands of people in Mizoram, including government employees, participated in a march to support the Tribals in Manipur.

Criticism and Boycotts: Several Kuki representatives boycotted the peace committee, stating they were included without their consent.



Risk Assessment

Continued violence



HIGH IMPACT



HIGH PROBABILITY

- High likelihood of continued violence due to escalating tensions between the Kuki and Meitei communities.
- Recent revelations of atrocities and killings could exacerbate the situation, especially following use of sophisticated arms by civilians
- Significant threat to prospects of peaceful resolution.
- Areas of particular concern include the foothills of Manipur and the outskirts of Imphal.

Political volatility



HIGH IMPACT



HIGH PROBABILITY

- High probability of political instability in the northeast states due to the Manipur unrest, particularly in neighboring states such as Mizoram, Assam, and Nagaland.
- Potential shift in regional political dynamics ahead of the 2024 Indian elections, with major parties like BJP and Congress struggling to establish a strong presence due to longstanding communal issues.
- Possible boycott or disruption of election proceedings.
- Potential for further division among groups due to political affiliations, highlighted by attacks on Kuki BJP MLAs in Manipur and criticism by regional alliances such as the North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) regarding the state government's handling of the conflict.

Internal conflicts



HIGH IMPACT



HIGH PROBABILITY

- High likelihood of Kuki groups advocating for separate administration, potentially leading to further administrative complexities.
- Significant challenges anticipated in reestablishing trust both within communities and towards the state and central administration.
- Internal discord within the ruling BJP government, underscored by attacks on MLAs from the Kuki community, further complicates the political landscape.

Insurgency movement & attack on women



HIGH IMPACT



MEDIUM PROBABILITY

- There is a medium likelihood of a rise in insurgency movements from the Kuki, Nagas, and Meitei communities.
- Recent revelations could potentially escalate the risk of attacks on women from these communities.
- Reports suggest these groups are armed and there is a possibility of attacks in areas dominated by either group.

Radicalization & communalisation



HIGH IMPACT



MEDIUM PROBABILITY

- High risk of radicalization, particularly among youth grappling with socio-economic challenges in the state, exacerbated by escalating violence and narratives of illegal migration potentially leading to lost opportunities.
- Potential risk of increased territorial separatism (hill & valley) between the tribal communities.
- Increased risk of communal polarization in light of reported attacks on religious communities and establishments, which could further sow seeds of mistrust among the populace.

International condemnation



MEDIUM IMPACT



MEDIUM PROBABILITY

- Medium likelihood of condemnation from countries and international organizations, underscored by the European Parliament's resolution.
- Potential trade repercussions, as hinted by the European Parliament, may materialize.
- Medium likelihood of intensified scrutiny from international human rights organizations, particularly following memorandum submitted to the UN by the Zo Re-unification Organization (ZORO).

Healthcare & food security



MEDIUM IMPACT



HIGH PROBABILITY

- High risk of a healthcare crisis, particularly in the hill areas, due to supply chain disruptions caused by the conflict leading to a shortage and increased cost of medical supplies.
- High risk of inflation for essential supplies, including rice, with a potential further increase of 15-20% in costs. This is primarily driven by the adverse impact on the agricultural sector, leading to fear among farmers, uncultivated lands, and a significant reduction in rice production.

Manipur Violence

CONFLICT watch

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