



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF INDIA (CBCI)

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PRESS NOTE ON MANIPUR

Archbishop Andrews Thazhath, President of Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) accompanied by Archbishop Dominic Lumon, Archdiocese of Imphal, Manipur, Fr. Jervis D'Souza, Deputy Secretary General, CBCI and Fr. Dr. Paul Moonjely, Executive Director, Caritas India visited the conflict-ridden areas of Manipur. The team visited Kakching, Sugnu area, Pukhao, Canchipur, Sangaiprou, etc. and saw the large-scale destruction of private homes, churches/places of worship, schools and institutions in various places along the way. The team distributed relief items for the displaced people in the Relief Camp at Indoor Stadium, Kakching and inaugurated a medical camp at Pukhou. Sugnu, which used to be inhabited by over 1000 families. They had their houses and properties totally destroyed and vandalized. St. Joseph's Higher Secondary School and Parish which rendered educational, social and developmental service to all communities including Kuki-zo, Naga, Meitei and others had been reduced to cinders. Holy Redeemer Church in the campus of Catholic School at Canchipur and the Regional Pastoral Training Centre and St. Paul's Parish at Sangaiprou had also been destroyed completely.

It was heart-wrenching to see that these places looked deserted and seemed like they will not be inhabited in the near future given the mutual mistrust and fear that continues to prevail. We are equally worried as to what is the actual situation and the future of those who have fled from these places and the future of their children, in the midst of all these vulnerabilities. We had the opportunity to visit some of the schools and hostels wherein we could see the anxieties and distress of the children clearly leaving us with no answers at this point of time as to how we can build better the communities and the institutions.

Caritas India, the humanitarian response organization of CBCI has been responding to this unprecedented crisis from the very beginning providing relief assistance and supporting the relief camps in collaboration with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Diocesan Social Services Society (DSSS), the Social Service Wing of the Archdiocese of Imphal. As of today, Caritas India has provided relief assistance worth 3 crores. As per the appeal from CBCI, the Church in India has been actively responding to this humanitarian crisis by way of prayer, organizing peace rallies and mobilizing resources to support the affected people. The assistance is equally rendered in all the affected areas. Caritas India is committed to take up continued assistance for the rehabilitation and rebuilding of the affected communities. As an expression of solidarity, various religious congregations and church fraternities have come forward to render various forms of assistance including material, healthcare, and psycho-social support in the relief camps.

We are deeply saddened about the prolonged situation of violence in Manipur. We condemn all forms of violence, atrocities and attacks especially on our institutions, places of worship and vulnerable sections of the society like women and children. We are equally worried about the prolonged silence and apathy of the law enforcement agencies in containing the violence. It is our earnest appeal that the governance system should uphold the secular fabric of our country, reinforce constitutional values and cultivate an environment of peaceful co-existence of various communities. We call upon all concerned persons to enter into the process of dialogue and concentrate on the development of all sections of the people in order to bring about peace and harmony in India and in particular in the State of Manipur.


Public Relations Office
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