

SUPREME INDICTMENT: ON MANIPUR CRISIS AND THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA'S CENSURE

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The [Supreme Court has pulled up the Manipur government for its "lethargic"](#) investigations into the ethnic violence in the sensitive border State that began on May 3 and which has still not been doused. Pointing out that arrests have been "few and far between", in the [context of around 6,500 first information reports](#) filed in relation to the violence, the apex court has asked for more details of the progress in police action, and ordered the personal presence of the Manipur Director General of Police during the next hearing on August 7. Questioning the State police's capability to investigate these cases, the Court noted that there was a complete breakdown of law and constitutional machinery in the face of mob violence. Two women who were paraded naked and raped by a mob have pleaded their lack of trust in the investigation by the police and the Central Bureau of Investigation. It was the circulation of a video clip that captured the horrific violence these women were subjected to that prompted the Court's intervention after weeks of unabated violence and the brazen partisanship of the Manipur government. More such cases have surfaced, and the Court has now proposed a Court-constituted investigation. [Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh](#) has no leg to stand on after this censure by the highest court in the land, but continues to remain in office with a total lack of accountability because the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is determined to protect him for political reasons.

The history of communal clashes in India suggests that mob violence for a prolonged period is possible only with the connivance of the state. In the case of Manipur, it is more than evident. Bringing perpetrators to book is far more tedious and often a frustrating process compared to taking swift preventive police action at the first sign of trouble. In Manipur, far from a swift response to prevent escalation, the police allegedly facilitated the mob violence. Police personnel who failed in their duty or connived with mobs should face the full force of the law. Also, there must be a strong message from the country's political leadership. Sadly, the attempt by the ruling BJP has been to deny the gravity of the Manipur situation by comparing it with isolated crimes in Opposition-ruled States. The Court has denounced that claim while underscoring the gravity of the situation in Manipur. A team of 21 leaders of the Opposition grouping, INDIA, that visited the State is scheduled to meet President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday. The grouping should also agree to a discussion in the Rajya Sabha even if its demand for a prior statement by the Prime Minister is not met. That will be an opportunity for INDIA to present its findings to the country.

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