

February 6th, 2018

Northern Burma/Myanmar: Global Kachin Appeal for UN Members' Action

Stop War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity

In response to a coordinated militant attack on August 25, 2017, the Burmese government security forces launched a military campaign in western Burma/Myanmar. This resulted in an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, killing thousands and displacing over half a million civilians. The horrendous atrocities suffered by the civilians at the hands of the Burma Army sparked worldwide outrage and provoked condemnation from the UN and other international bodies. While such human tragedy unfolded in the western part of Burma, residents of northern Burma were also suffering ongoing and systemic violence perpetrated by Burma Army.

The international community needs to focus greater attention to the current humanitarian crisis in northern Burma. Over 100,000 Kachin locals have been internally displaced for over six years when the previous government broke a 17-year cease fire agreement which directly led to armed conflict in northern Burma. Kachins continue to live under a constant state of fear and sustain appalling human rights abuses. The Burma Army is currently conducting air assaults against positions of the Kachin Independence Organization/Army (KIO/KIA) in Sumprabum, Danai, and Mansi areas, indiscriminately shelling areas in close proximity to civilian population and IDP camps. About 2000 miners and migrant workers were reportedly held as hostages since January 26th, 2018 and are used as shields by the Burma Army in Danai. In Sumprabum, shelling of civilian homes in Nhtan Zup village and Ndup Yang IDP camp has forced villagers to abandon their shelters. While conducting these air assaults in Kachin State, the Burma Army concurrently held peace talks with the KIO/KIA right across the border in China, indicating insincere intention for cooperation.

With the use of advanced military technologies procured through exploitation of natural resources in ethnic states, including amber and gold from Danai, the Burma Army leadership is coercing the KIO/KIA to concede territory and sign the non-inclusive Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

Although all of Burma was hopeful for a change when the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won a landslide victory in 2015, the NLD government has yet to effectuate a genuine transition to Federal Union. The continued use of repressive laws, underpinned by the 2008 military-drafted Constitution, protects military interests and its usurpation of the elected government has left all ethnic groups in despair, a familiar sentiment experienced under decades of military-junta rule.

Now is not the time for finger-pointing but to do what is right and just for the people of Burma.

Hence, we the undersigned:

- Urge the Burma Army to transform its commanding core so that it reflects the diversity of the ethnic landscape of the country.
- Call upon the NLD government to launch a campaign to amend the 2008 constitution, in particular the clauses concerning civilian oversight of the military, and to reject the ballooning military expenditures.

- Request the United States, the UK, the EU and their allies to confer with China in arbitrating Burmese military's negotiations with ethnic groups for a realistic and enduring solution to end the civil wars in Burma.
- Implore the United Nations and the Members of the Security Council to set an agenda to evaluate and monitor the humanitarian and ongoing conflict in northern Burma.

It is imperative that the international community launch a coordinated relief effort to provide assistance in all areas, including territories besieged by the Burma Army. The residents of northern Burma, particularly those in IDP camps, have been waiting for 6 years for the international community to respond to their plight and despair.

We urge you to take appropriate and immediate actions whereby our beleaguered population may finally be relieved of the misery they have long endured.

Signatories:

1. Htoi Gender and Development Foundation
2. Humanity Institute (HI)
3. Kachin Alliance, USA
4. Kachin Association of Australia NSW
5. Kachin Canadian Association, Canada
6. Kachin Community Czech Republic
7. Kachin Community Netherlands
8. Kachin Development Network Group
9. Kachin Literature and Culture (JLH), Singapore
10. Kachin National Organization
11. Kachin Refugee Committee, Malaysia
12. Kachin State Women Network
13. Kachin Women Peace Network
14. Kachin Women Union
15. Kachin Women's Association Thailand
16. Korea Kachin Community, ROK
17. Mungchying Rawt Jat
18. Sha-it
19. Shingnip (Kachin Legal Aids Network)
20. Universities Kachin Literature and Culture Federation, Burma/Myanmar

- Gum San Nsang (US), gumsan@kachinalliance.org, Ph.+1-443-415-8683
- Hkanhpa Sadan (UK), hkanhpa@hotmail.com, Ph. +44-7944-240774
- Moon Nay Li (Thailand), moonnayli@gmail.com, Ph. +66-855-23-3791
- Zau Jat (Burma/Myanmar), jatnhkum09@gmail.com, Ph. +95440006442