



November 20, 2014

On Nov 19, 2014, the Burma Army launched a surprise artillery attack on the Military Academy of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) near its Laiza headquarters, killing 23 officer cadets and injuring 20 cadets and trainers.

The attack is unprovoked and deliberate, and is in blatant violation of the agreement reached between the government and the KIO on May 13, 2004, to de-escalate military tensions.

The Kachin Alliance, a network of Kachin communities and organizations in the US therefore, strongly condemns this heinous and cowardly act.

The Burma Army, even in the midst of nationwide ceasefire talks, had been engaged in military maneuvers, encroaching upon KIO territory, taking control of frontline positions and fortifying them with heavy artillery.

For the sake of the nationwide peace process and the safety of innocent IDPs whose camps are in proximity to frontline positions, we strongly demand that the Burma Army make an immediate and complete withdrawal from these positions.

We demand that President Thein Sein, if he is to claim credibility for the peace process his government is currently engaged in, take full responsibility for the Nov. 19 killings, and take steps to prevent any such violations that would derail the peace talks.

In addition, we would like to petition the US, the UN and others in the international community, to use their good offices to pressure the Burmese government to keep to its reform promises and to find solutions to the decades-old ethnic conflict through political negotiations rather than military means.

We also appeal to the wider Burmese society and friends worldwide to stand in solidarity with us Kachins, as we struggle to reclaim the rights promised to us upon independence.

In closing, we would like to offer our deepest condolences to the families and friends of the 23 cadets who perished, and our prayers for the rapid recovery of the injured.