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**International Karen Organisation**

Asia Pacific Region

European Region

US/Canada Region

### **Open Letter to KNU**

To,  
Central Executive Committee  
Karen National Union

Dated 24-08-2015

The International Karen Organization Comprising of Karen Organizations from all over the world is very apprehensive about the statement issued after the 5<sup>th</sup> Central Committee Meeting of the 15 KNU Congress as it could affect the future of the Karen Resistance and the Karen people.

The meeting between Sr. General Min Aung Hlaing and the British Ambassador Andrew Patrick on August 19, and the interview of Min Aung Hlaing by Daw Nyein Shwe of RFA must have been viewed and heard by the KNU Leaders. The same old record of giving up armed resistance policy and returning to the legal fold has been played all over again. The KNU Leaders must have by now realized the consequences if they were to sign the NCA.

The KNU is traditionally resolute in its resistance for the cause not only of the Karen nationals but also that of other ethnic groups in Burma. Therefore, it is our utmost desire that KNU would not continue to make further political blunders.

For the Karen Resistance to succeed, we must join hands with our fellow oppressed ethnic nationals in confronting our common enemy, the racial supremacist Burmese rulers to enable us to establish a Federal Union based on equality and self-determination. This is the principle laid down by Saw Ba Oo Gyi and had been continued under successive Presidents from Mahn Ba Zan, General Mya, P'doh Ba Thinn Sein up to Saw Tamla Baw, so focus must be emphatically be on the cause of UNFC because KNU has been esteemed as a big brother by its fellow ethnic nationals.

During the time of President Mutu Say Po, the partial reference to Saw Ba Oo Gyi's principle for the Karen people to their own destiny prompted the KNU to resign from UNFC. This move has destroyed the KNU tradition as well as abetted the Burmese government's desire to create disunity among the ethnic groups. This is observed as committing a political error.

Again, another KNU's political error observed is its reneging on NCA's all-inclusive policy agreed on at Laiza and Lawkheelar at the 5<sup>th</sup> KNU Central Standing Committee Emergency Meeting. This decision reveals its lack of commitment to work unitedly with the ethnic groups and its acquiescence to the enemy's desire. The Burmese Government's rejection of the all-inclusive policy indicates its intention to negotiate with the ethnic groups separately. A nationwide ceasefire must be carried out at the national

level. Leaving out one group or the others shows the insincere motive of the Government. In reality, it has to be the Burmese Government that should declare a nationwide ceasefire first.

It seems that U Thein Sein's government is more interested in winning the election rather than the signing of NCA. The end of his government's term is only a few months away. It could not give time to the ceasefire and peace process. This leaves the succeeding government to continue the negotiations, so it is not a matter of life and death to rush the process.

The NCA draft has taken years to be drawn, yet it still has many undefined articles that need to be given in-depth consideration. One example is the NCA Single Text Section (1) Basic Principles Part 1(A) states "the absolute rights and guarantee of a democracy, equality, and self determination based Democracy and Federal System in establishing a Union will depend on the political outcomes of the negotiations". This is what the ethnic groups should not accept. The reason is the government could manipulate the political negotiations.

Historically, KNU was founded to represent the entire Karen people. At this time when there are a lot of confusing thoughts and opinions regarding the NCA draft, KNU should solicit opinions from various Karen groups such as Karen political parties, social groups, scholars, and armed forces. Failing to do this proves that it has been done for the benefit of one particular group, and not representing the entire Karen people, ignoring and disrespecting them as well. The International Karen Organization supports the all-inclusive policy of the armed ethnic groups' agreement made at the Laiza, Pang Seng and Lawkhealar Congress on nationwide ceasefire respectively.

International Karen Organization strongly declares that it will stand together with the KNU leaders who abide by the all-inclusive policy. If those who would go against this policy and determined to go ahead with signing the NCA would be deemed accountable for damaging consequences that would arise for the Karen people, in the Karen Resistance areas as well as areas of other ethnic groups. In addition, they would go down as culprits in the Karen Resistance history.

Respectful leaders, may we implore you to seriously consider the above mentioned concerns and make correct decisions so that the Karen people could establish a genuine Federal Union with equality, justice, democracy and self-determination as per their aspirations.

Central Executive Committee  
International Karen Organization