



**Karen National Union
Supreme Headquarters
Kawthoolei
www.knuhq.org**

**Karen National Union President Gen. Mutu Say Poe's Address on 66th
Anniversary of Karen Martyrs' Day**

August 12, 2016

**Dear Karen Nationals,
Leaders and Comrade Menfolk & Womenfolk,**

Today, the 12th of August, is the 66th Anniversary of Karen National Martyrs' Day. Our Karen people have a number of special days, designated for honor and commemoration according to the Karen national history and experience, and the Martyrs' Day is the day on which the Karen people honor and commemorate the Karen national martyrs President Saw Ba U Gyi, together with the leaders, soldiers and the common people, who have sacrificed their lives for the Karen nation. It is a day we have to respect, honor and commemorate forever in the historical records of the Karen nation. On this Karen national Martyrs' Day, I would like to wish all our Karen nationals linked to the martyrs, to be proud of their beloved ones, who have sacrificed their lives and have become martyrs for the Karen nation.

In the 67 years of Karen national armed resistance, there has been uncountable number of Karen national martyrs, who have sacrificed for our nation their valuable lives they had received as human beings. They have sacrificed their valuable lives purposely for the Karen people to be freed from oppression and fear, and to acquire a life of peace and prosperity, and be a vibrant and progressive nation. Our national martyrs, who have sacrificed their valuable lives, have done their duties completely for the nation. In more than 60 years of Karen armed resistance, because of the sacrifice made by the national martyrs and the support and cooperation by many of our nationals, our national struggle is able to sustain up to this day.

**Dear Karen Nationals,
Leaders and Comrade Menfolk & Womenfolk,**

Our Karen nationals love freedom and peace, aspire to live in peaceful coexistence with the other nationalities, with mutual recognition, respect and freedom from abuse. Throughout the Karen history, we have to face and live a life of anxiety and difficulty because of the nationalities of greater number and power. In order for us to survive as a people, we must strive to uphold in many ways our national identity, culture, customs and traditions. However, instead of an opportunity, as the very existence of our nation came under attack, the Karen people had to take up arms eventually in 1949, under the leadership of Karen National Union (KNU), and resisted attacks by the forces trying to destroy our Karen national identity, dignity and progress.

**Dear Karen Nationals,
Leaders and Comrade Menfolk & Womenfolk,**

The Karen national armed resistance struggle, under the leadership of the KNU, is to defend the KNU's political goal of realizing aspirations of the Karen nation, to defend the

Karen people and promote the political demand to resolve the political problems peacefully through political dialogue. The KNU accepts and believes that resolution of the Karen national problem through political dialogue is the best and most suitable method. The military activities are to defend and promote the fulfilment of political work by the KNU. In accordance with this position, whenever opportunity occurs the KNU, in talks with the government representatives, makes a demand to the government to establish internal peace and resolve the Karen national political problems by political means. However, up to this day the KNU's position and demand so far have not produced any result.

**Dear Karen Nationals,
Leaders and Comrade Menfolk & Womenfolk,**

Starting from 2011, during the time of the Myanmar government led by President U Thein Sein, the KNU and the ethnic nationality armed organizations held talks with the government and entered into ceasefire agreement individually at the state and at the union levels. After 2013, the ethnic armed nationality organizations grouped together, held talks with the government for nationwide ceasefire and reached the stage of producing a document for Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

The agreement is not only for ceasefire. It also contains agreement to hold talks for resolving the root political problems that have caused the civil war and agreement for the establishment of a democratic federal union in accordance with the results of political dialogues. Holding political dialogues for resolving the root political problems that have caused the civil war has been demand of the KNU and the ethnic nationality armed organizations for many years.

Nowadays, the National League for Democracy (NLD) led new government, elected by the people, holds the position to establish internal peace and a democratic federal union in accordance with the demand, contained in the NCA made by the ethnic nationalities, through the political dialogues. In accordance with its position, the government has been making preliminary preparations for holding political dialogues and step by step progress.

**Dear Karen Nationals,
Leaders and Comrade Menfolk & Womenfolk,**

Just as we have endeavored for the emergence of political dialogues, at this time when the political dialogues are about to emerge, in addition to holding discussions on political work and programs so as to be able to implement the political dialogue process in accordance with the agreed points contained in the NCA, it is necessary to be able to keep watch constantly.

As the time has come to discuss and make known the political expectations and views of the people, made up of our nationals and those of the ethnic nationalities, and the establishment of a union based on federal principles, it is necessary for the KNU and the Karen people to be politically prepared for fulfilling aspirations of the Karen nation. Under these circumstances, the Karen people need to work together in their own individual corners. It is especially necessary for the educated Karen intellectuals to get together and contribute their knowledge and skills for our nation, like our national martyrs, by participating in the activities of political discussion and dialogue. In future activities, it is necessary for our national organizations, based at home and abroad, to have action programs, understanding and cooperation among themselves properly and correctly in their own individual sectors. As the saying goes in time of our parents and grandparents, let us not be like the person, "Sitting on a log and counting the grass in the farm," since it is decidedly necessary for us to get off the log and clear the farm of the grass for the benefit of our nation.

In order to establish internal peace and resolve the political problems that have caused the civil war, it is necessary for us to work together with the ethnic nationality armed organizations and other political organizations, which have the same fate and political aims as we do, in unity and on the basis of equality. In the current situation, though all the ethnic nationality armed organizations cannot accept the NCA and participate in the political dialogues, as they do not have the same conviction and positions, it is necessary for us to have mutual understanding and cooperate in the common programs, on the basis of achieving the same goal. Within the diversity, we have to build up understanding and cooperation, on the basis of realizing the same aim.

At the same time, we on our part have to make preparations in order to obviate bullying and harassment militarily, while we are striving to resolve the political problems politically, in a peaceful way. As we are a free people, we have the right to defend honorably our people and prevent the dangers falling on them. We shall not be barred from doing so.

**Dear Karen Nationals,
Leaders and Comrade Menfolk & Womenfolk,**

Up to this day the Karen nationals and the ethnic nationalities have not gained fully the right to enjoy freedom, national equality and self-determination, legally. According to political processes, it is necessary for those rights to be precisely provided for in the constitution. It is necessary to endeavor for gaining those rights in the political dialogues.

There are many challenges with regard to the aspirations of our Karen nation and our organization's leadership in future political activities, our national unity and cooperation. We have to reevaluate the leadership of our organization, our organizational unity and the performance of duty by each national individually in our cooperation and make corrections as necessary, and realize the real aspirations of our nationals in the most consonant way with the political situation we now have.

It is necessary for leaders of the KNU and all the members, including the entire Karen people, to build up unity and publicize the aspirations of our nation with diligence and utmost endeavor so as to realize the aspirations of our nation and the hopes for which our national martyrs have sacrificed their lives.

**Dear Karen Nationals,
Leaders and Comrade Menfolk & Womenfolk,**

During the time when we have to engage in armed resistance, though most of the Karen people could not participate in the struggle together with us, for different reasons, in the time when the struggle is undertaken by political means, it is possible for every Karen national to get together and cooperate in the struggle in their own localities and fields of activities. The time has come and the situation allows for the Karen nationals to gallantly and clearly demonstrate their unity and reveal the Karen people's political aspirations.

Today is the day on which we honor and commemorate our national martyrs. May our honoring and commemoration be a true one, with making pledges to our national martyrs to build up our national unity and strive for fulfilling the hopes and meaning, for which the martyrs have sacrificed their lives. May all our nationals commemorate and honor the martyrs from the bottom of their hearts, struggle for fulfilling the aspirations of our nation, live as a nation with freedom, uphold our national honor and dignity to sustain national existence and make progress.
