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International Karen Organisation

Asia Pacific Region

European Region

US/Canada Region

IKO Statement on Recurrence of Armed Clashes in KNU Territory

May 15, 2018

1. In the previous months of March, as the Myanmar Tatmadaw (MT or Burman Army) in an act of aggressive expansion, intruded into the demarcated territory of the Karen National Union (KNU), under the pretext of doing development work, armed clashes recurred in the Brigade-5 and Brigade-7 Areas.
2. Currently, as the MT is reinforcing its strength and taking up positions in the KNU controlled areas, tension has developed between the two sides. In the previous month of March, though there was an agreement with the KNU Military Affairs Negotiation Team (MANT) to hold a meeting for resolving the problem, the MT side rescinded the agreement unilaterally, without a valid reason.
3. Due to armed clashes, thousands of Karen village people have to flee and take up refuge in forests and hills. Moreover, the MT troops are taking up positions in areas of the people's livelihood and shooting the villagers to kill, on sight. The KIO is much concerned about the IDP, who have to survive in the harsh environments, as the rainy season will be upon them soon.
4. Since the beginning of dialogue for peace in the country, the MT has treated the ethnic resistance organizations discriminatorily. It continually attacks the ethnic organizations, which have not signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). Currently, it is launching offensives against the Kachin national resistance organization, ruthlessly and aggressively. Moreover, as it frequently commits aggressive and belligerent acts against the NCA signatories, even armed clashes recur in NCA areas. Now, it is evidently provoking the KNU, aggressively.
5. Accordingly, if we appraise the events, we would see that the MT does not really want peace and end the civil war, but it has been manipulating the peace talks to gain military advantage. The IKO is of the view that the MT has been carrying out belligerent acts to cause instability and conflicts within the country, obviously to perpetuate the rule of military dictatorship and chauvinism (feudal fascism). For the reasons mentioned above, we the IKO call upon the Myanmar government Tatmadaw, governments of the world and international organizations as follows.

We, the International Karen Organization (IKO):

- (1) Call on the Myanmar Government and Myanmar Tatmadaw to cease immediately the military offensives against the indigenous ethnic resistance organizations;
- (2) Urge the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the war crimes against the indigenous ethnic peoples in the country, committed by the Myanmar Tatmadaw and take actions against the responsible persons in the Myanmar Tatmadaw;
- (3) Urge the national and international relief organizations, the international human rights organizations and refugee relief organizations to provide timely humanitarian aid and assistance to people in distress, caused by military clashes;
- (4) Urge not only the international organizations but also the internal human rights organizations and humanitarian organizations to aid and assist speedily the Kachin people blocked currently, in the conflict zone, by the Myanmar Tatmadaw;
- (5) Request the Thai Royal Government not to pressure the Karen refugees to return home, unless and until there is guarantee for their safe return, and to give refuge to the new Karen war refugees, who have crossed into Thailand;
- (6) Urge the entire indigenous ethnic peoples of Myanmar to oppose together the warmonger Myanmar Tatmadaw, which has been oppressing, bullying and attacking our fellow brethren, and give assistance to those, who are trapped in a dire situation caused by war.

**Central Executive Committee
International Karen Organization (IKO)**