



အိတွာထည်ပုဂ္ဂလိကအိန်မိုတင်ဆိုင်ထွဲမာစာကမ်းတံင်
Ei Tu Hta Internally Displaced Person
Supporting Committee
Email : ettidpsc@gmail.com

Burma Government Must Address Root Causes of Decades-long Civil War Before Discussion of IDP Return

25, June, 2018

The decades-long offensives waged against ethnic nationalities by the Burmese military has created a humanitarian crisis in Burma. The overwhelming number of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees from Karen, Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States are the direct consequence of the ongoing conflict, coupled with the widespread and systematic human rights violations that continue to be committed by the Burmese military. Given the lack of comprehensive political dialogue, the limited and largely cosmetic political changes since the initiation of the peace process six years ago and the recent deadlock in the peace negotiations, we the undersigned raise grave concerns regarding the Burmese government's recent announcement that it plans to close down IDP camps in conflict ridden areas throughout Burma - a plan that is being pursued without the participation of the affected communities.

The announcement to close down the IDP camps in Karen, Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States comes on the heels of the recent breach of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) by the Burmese military in Karen State where over 2,400 people were once again forced to flee into the jungle as a result of resumed conflict, and are likely to remain there throughout the monsoon season without aid. Pregnant women have been forced to give birth in the jungle as children and elderly remain vulnerable without food, education and health care. This aggressive move by the Burmese military could possibly trigger a new cycle of displacement in Karen State, forcing additional civilians to leave their homes once again.

In addition, as Kachin State saw its seventh year since the resumption of war, the number of those displaced in Kachin State alone has risen to over 120,000 people. Kachin State has seen one of its worst offensives by the Burmese military recently, as they indiscriminately conducted heavy artillery and aerial bombings of nearby civilian areas and IDP camps. The Burmese military has continued to display complete disregard for international human rights and humanitarian law as over 7,000 IDPs have taken shelter in existing and new IDP camps in northern Burma since March 2018, while hundreds remain stuck in active conflict areas.

To forge on with the recently announced "National Strategy for the closure of IDP camps in Myanmar" under these circumstances will lead to forcible resettlement and risk of secondary displacement upon return or resettlement, further endangering the lives of those who are already extremely vulnerable. Before any return or resettlement of IDPs can be

discussed, root causes of conflict must be addressed. This includes holding the Burmese military accountable for their violations of the NCA in addition to the decades of human right violations perpetrated against ethnic nationalities. In addition, the Burma government must observe the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and as such the return of IDPs must be voluntarily, in safety and with dignity. This requires that IDPs and affected communities are ensured full participation in the discussion, planning and management of the IDPs possible return, resettlement and reintegration without which return cannot be sustainable. In addition, the role of ethnic organizations who have supported the IDPs for decades must also be recognized. It is imperative that they are consulted in all discussions involving the return of IDPs as they are best placed to provide essential services and support upon their return.

Despite the increasing cuts to food and provision of education and health services in Ei Tu Hta IDP camp, as well as Shan IDP and refugee camps along the Thailand-Burma border since 2017, the majority of the IDPs have remained in the camps as conflict continues to intensify throughout Burma. Thus, concern should be placed, not on the return or resettlement of IDPs, but on provision of aid and allowing international organizations access to IDPs who fear for their safety upon their return and rely on the IDP camps for safety and security.

Another concern facing returning IDPs is the potential for conflict upon resettlement due to the lack of available space, land, natural resources and livelihood opportunities, especially given the widespread land confiscation that has taken place since the signing of the ceasefire in 2012.

The “National Strategy for the closure of IDP camps in Myanmar” is premature and shortsighted. It does not address the root causes of displacement while closure of the camps has the real risk of endangering civilians and causing secondary displacement.

We urge the Burma government to:

1. Immediately halt all plans involving closure of IDP camps in ethnic areas
2. Respect the rights of IDPs and affected communities and ensure that all discussions, planning and management of IDP return or resettlement include their full participation and consultation
3. Ensure that all IDPs have access to humanitarian aid in accordance with international humanitarian law and allows for unimpeded access to all humanitarian aid organizations
4. Recognize and respect local organizations, particularly ethnic organizations, and their agency and role in delivering aid to the IDPs in their respective areas

We urge the Burmese Military to:

1. Immediately cease all military offensives and withdraw troops from ethnic areas
2. Build trust by genuinely engaging with the peace process
3. Ensure that all IDPs have access to humanitarian aid in accordance with international humanitarian law and allows for unimpeded access to all humanitarian aid organizations

**Executive Board
Ei Tu Hta IDP Supporting Committee
+ 66 879 4387 50**

Endorsed organizations:

1. Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN)
2. Karen Women Organization (KWO)
3. Karen Refugee Committee (KRC)
4. Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN)
5. Karen Teacher Working Group (KTWG)
6. Karen Education Department (KED)
7. Karen Office of Relief and Development (KORD)
8. Karen River Watch (KRW)
9. Karen Affairs Committee (KAC)
10. Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)
11. Karen State Civil Society Organization Network (KSCN)
12. Karen Student Network Group (KSNG)
13. Karen Youth Organization (KYO)
14. Tarkapaw Youth Group
15. Tanintharyi Friends
16. Committee for Internally Displaced Karen Peoples (CIDKP)
17. Burma Medical Association (BMA)
18. Back Pack Health Worker Team (BPHWT)
19. Mae Tao Clinic
20. Thwee Community Development Network (TCDN)
21. Hsar Mu Htaw CSO
22. Youth Circle (YC)
23. Mutraw Community Development Committee (MCDC)
24. ရွက်စိမ်းနု သဘာဝပတ်ဝန်းကျင်ထိန်းသိမ်းရေးအဖွဲ့
25. Action Group for Farmer Affair (AGFA) (Ayayarwaddy Division)
26. Action Group for Farmer Affair (AGFA) (Magway Division)
27. Action Group for Farmer Affair (AGFA) (Pagu Division)
28. Action Group for Farmer Affair (AGFA) (Sagaing Division)
29. Action Group for Farmers Affair (AGFA) (Mandalay Division)
30. All Kachin Youth Union
31. Asiochin Independence force.
32. AWDO(Naphe)
33. Ayeyarwady west Development Organization.AWDO (Magway , 9th township)
34. Ayeyarwaddy Transparency and Accountability Association (ATTA)
35. Bedar Social Development Group
36. Belinn CSO Network
37. Candle Light
38. Chin Women Development Organization
39. Chin Youth Organization (Matupi)
40. Community Development Association

41. Green Network Mergui Archipelago
42. Htoi Gender and Development Foundation
43. Human Right Foundation of Mon Land (HURFOM)
44. K'Cho Land Development Associatuon
45. Kachin and Research Center Reply
46. Kachin Development and Networking Group (KDNG)
47. Kachin Educational Foundation (KEF)
48. Kachin State Youth Assembly
49. Kachin State Youth Association
50. Kachin Women Union (KWN)
51. Kan Chay Arr Mann fishery development network (Nga Yoke Kaung)
52. Kanpetlet Land Development Association
53. Matu Forum Committee
54. Mon Area Community Development Organization (MACDO)
55. Mon Youth Progressive Organiztion (MYPO)
56. MRJ (မာယာဂျာအဖွဲ့)
57. Myeik Lawyer Network
58. NeT organization
59. Open Development Foundation
60. Peace and Justice
61. Pwinphyu Development Organization (PDO)
62. Ram Rawt (YRDO - Youth Resources Development Organisation)
63. Saytana Shaesaung Youth Organization
64. Saytodetayar Development Organization. SDO)
65. Shwe Thinkha Social Development Organization
66. Southern Youth
67. Thanbyuzayart Mon Youth
68. The Seagull
69. Yomachin (saytodetaya)
70. Youth Recure (Ramhkye)
71. ကလျာဏမိတ္တလူမှုဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးအသင်း (ခင်ဦး)
72. ကလေးသူငယ်ကာကွယ်စောင့်ရှောက်ရေး ကွန်ယက်
73. ဂရုဏာရှင် နာရေးကူညီရေးအဖွဲ့
74. SarPhyu Famar Network
75. စိမ်းရောင်စို (တံတားဦး)
76. ဇင်လွန်းကော်မတီ (တန်ဖရဲ့)
77. တို့မျိုးဆက်ကွန်ရက်
78. ဓမ္မအလင်း ယဉ်ကျေးလိမ္မာအဖွဲ့
79. Pan Tain Shin Women Rural Development Orgalization
80. Pan Tain Shin Rural Development Orgalization
81. ပျိုးဥယျာဉ် ပညာရေး အထောက်အကူပြုအဖွဲ့
82. မတူအမျိုးသမီးဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးအဖွဲ့
83. Muditar Organization

84. ရည်ရွယ်ရာ လူမှုဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးအဖွဲ့
85. Lin lake Kyal Social Development Organization
86. လပွတ္တာတောင်သူလယ်သမားသမဂ္ဂ
87. Future Star Youth Organization
88. အလင်းတန်းလူမှုဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးအဖွဲ့(ဘိုကလေး)
89. အလင်းမီးအိမ်
90. အလင်းသီတံ
91. ဧရာ-သလ္လာအဖွဲ့
92. ဧရာဝတီတိုင်းတောင်သူလယ်သမားသမဂ္ဂ
93. တောင်ပိုင်းလူငယ်ဖွံ့ဖြိုးအဖွဲ့
94. တောင်သူလယ်သမားသမဂ္ဂ (ကန့်ဘလူမြို့နယ်)
95. Regional Development Organization
96. Paungsee Myittar Organization
97. မြေယာနှင့်ပတ်ဝန်းကျင်ထိန်းသိမ်း အဖွဲ့၊ ကွတ်ခိုင်မြို့နယ်
98. Young Ni Oo Social Development Organization
99. Young Ni Oo Women Group
100. ရွှေခြင်္သေ့လူမှုစောင့်ရှောက်ရေးအသင်း
101. ရွှေခြင်္သေ့တောင်သူကွန်ရက်
102. CAFT Citizen Action for Transparency
103. Generation Wave
104. MCRS Myanmar Cultural Research Society
105. Burma Monitor
106. COMREG
107. Pace on Peaceful pluralism
108. Progressive Voice