



JOINT STATEMENT

Karen National Union & Restoration Council of the Shan State

17 July, 2013

In response to the ethnic armed groups' proposal, the Government of Myanmar recently announced that it will invite ethnic armed groups to Naypyitaw to sign a nation-wide ceasefire. A nation-wide ceasefire is a significant milestone as it consolidates the ceasefires already signed as the foundation for the next phase of the peace process.

Over the past year, the 18 ethnic armed groups have worked together to develop a framework for political dialogue with the Government. Armed groups have committed to this framework in order to ensure that the peace process does not stop with individual ceasefires. Groups continue to work together to ensure that the peace process moves forward. In the spirit of the words of the late Karen leader, Saw Ba U Gyi, "*The destiny of Karen people will be decided by the Karen People,*" each armed group retains the legal authority and mandate to negotiate with the government on behalf of their people.

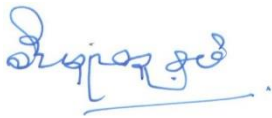
The process of attaining a nation-wide ceasefire has involved direct negotiations between the individual armed groups and the Government, as these conflict partners must agree to end the armed conflict. In the political dialogue, additional stakeholders such as political parties, civil society, Parliament, the Burma Army and key leaders such as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi need to participate actively.

Numerous sources have referred to the use of mediators or facilitators. The dialogue process in Burma is very complicated, with multiple stakeholders simultaneously involved.

This is not conducive to use of a single mediator. To overcome this situation, the National Dialogue process designed by ethnic armed groups enables all stakeholders to address their concerns without the use of mediators. As the process matures, stakeholders can request to utilize mediators or facilitators for specific discussions. Normally, stakeholders do not act as mediators or facilitators.

For the first time ever, all of Burma's stakeholders will sit together to discuss and design how to bring lasting and just peace to all of Burma's citizens. The process is based in unity and consensus, and all of the stakeholders will have to move together for the process to succeed.

All of the armed groups respect the concerns of individual stakeholders, and the process will ensure that all stakeholders and Burma's concerned citizens have the opportunity to raise concerns throughout the process.



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