

Kachin Women's Peace Forum urges an immediate end to Myanmar Tatmadaw offensives in Kachin areas so that the peace process can proceed

Date: October 1, 2016

The Kachin Women's Peace forum was held for two days, from September 28 to 29, 2016, in City Park Royal Restaurant, Myitkyina, Kachin State. The forum was attended by 110 women leaders, including representatives from IDP camps in areas of Kachin and Northern Shan State where military offensives are currently taking place. Peace and women's security issues were discussed.

The aims of the forum were as follows:

- To enable women to participate meaningfully in current political and peace processes
- To share among Kachin women the recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review on Human Rights report and CEDAW report
- To have effective cooperation between women's groups and networks working at different levels, from local to international.

During the two days, discussions were held about challenges faced by women in their daily lives, related to politics, social, economic, security, land, natural resources and the environment, violence against women, and gender discrimination in society. In order to overcome these challenges effectively, development of new policies and laws, and strategies to advocate and mobilize cooperatively as a network were discussed.

All of the women leaders attending the forum agreed that the most immediate challenge facing women is the urgent need to end military offensives and begin a genuine all-inclusive peace process.

From the discussions, it was clear that there has been failure to implement the UPR and CEDAW recommendations, particularly the need for the government to fully protect women and children's rights, ensure security for civilians, protect the rights of civilians in conflict zones, and enable provision of humanitarian aid.

During the two-day discussion, women's leaders raised the following concerns:

1. During the past 40 days, since before the 21st Century Panglong Conference until today, in Kachin areas, the Myanmar Tatmadaw has used fighter aircraft and artillery to carry out large scale offensives, which have terrorized innocent civilians in IDP camps and villages (especially on September 28, when the attacks were fiercest).
2. Shells have exploded near IDP camps and villages, causing injury among civilians, including children. Every day, children, elderly and women are living in fear, facing physical and mental insecurity. (On September 25, at 5 am,

three 81 mm shells exploded near Munglai Khyet and Wai Chyai IDP camps in Bhamo District, and on September 28, fighting intensified near Magayang IDP camp in Myitkyina District. On October 1 at 6 am, fighting took place in Buwan village, Mong Ko tract, Northern Shan State, and three children, aged 6, 5 and 2 years old were seriously injured. The 2-year-old child died immediately, and the other two are in critical condition.

3. The delivery of vital humanitarian aid to IDPs, including food and medicine, has been delayed, due to the need to apply for permission at different levels. The restriction of humanitarian aid is a violation of international humanitarian law (for example, due to the announcement by the State government that aid could only be delivered to IDP camps with official permission, the Myanmar Tatmadaw did not allow food supplies from WFP to be transported to Man Win Gyi IDP camp, and medicines supplied by UNOCHA were confiscated.)

It is thus urgently needed for the Myanmar Tatmadaw to immediately end its military offensives in Kachin areas, and to ensure that vital humanitarian aid is provided to innocent civilians, without any restriction. For the sake of the peace process, we urgently appeal to the State Counsellor and Nobel Peace Laureate, the President, the Defense Minister, the Union Hluttaw, Kachin State Chief Minister, Kachin State government and Kachin State Parliament, to adhere with the peace road map that currently under taking.

Furthermore, for the sake of the peace process, we Kachin women urge all stakeholders, including international governments, donors and the Peace Commission, negotiation teams of the ethnic armed groups to negotiate to bring about an end to the current fighting and to be able to support the urgent needs of humanitarian assistance to the IDPs.

Altogether 110 women's leaders from 16 areas of Kachin and northern Shan State, from 39 women's groups/networks attended the forum. Participants were from the following organizations:

1. Kachin State Member of Parliament – 2 women
2. Kachin State Counselor and Advisory Team – 2 women
3. Kachin Women Union – 4 women
4. Kachin Women's Association Thailand – 1 woman
5. Kachin Women's Association Thailand (Myitkyina) – 9 women
6. Kachin Women's Association Thailand (Muse) – 2 women
7. Kachin Women Association (Sadung) – 1 woman
8. Kachin Women Association (Laiza) – 2 women
9. Kachin Women Association (Mai Ja Yang) – 2 women
10. Kachin Women Association (Hpa Kant) – 1 woman
11. Kachin Women Association (Ta Naing) – 1 woman
12. Kachin Women Peace Network – 4 women
13. Kachin Peace Network – 1 woman

14. Kachin Baptist Convention (Women Department) – 13 women
15. Myanmar Council of Churches (Women Department) – 3 women
16. Independent Christian Women Group (ICM) – 2 women
17. Myitkyina District Women's Group – 5 women
18. Anglican Church Women's Group – 2 women
19. Catholic Church Women's Group – 2 women
20. Longvo Baptist Women's Group – 2 women
21. Lisu Baptist Women's Group – 2 woman
22. Mong Baw Zone Kachin Baptist Women's Group – 5 women
23. Northern Shan Kachin Baptist Women's Group – 2 women
24. Kutkhai Zone Kachin Baptist Women's Group – 3 women
25. Northern Shan Literature and Culture Committee (Women Department) - 1
26. Hting Nai Zone Kachin Baptist Women's Group – 2 women
27. Chibwe township Kachin Baptist Convention Women's Department – 1 woman
28. Putao township Kachin Baptist Convention Women's Department – 1 woman
29. Bhamo Zone Kachin Baptist Women's Group – 1 woman
30. Individual - 1
31. LCC Laykone Women's Group – 1 woman
32. KLCC Kachin Laykone Women's Group – 1 woman
33. Htoi Gender and Development Foundation – 5 women
34. Myusha Zinlum (Hpakant) – 12 women
35. A Myushayi Zinlum (Myitkyina) – 5 women
36. Kachin Legal Aids Network (Shingnip) – 2 women
37. Kachin Lawyer Network (Northern Shan State) – 1 woman
38. Wunpawng Ninghtoi – 2 women
39. Alliance for Gender Inclusion in Peace Process – 1 woman

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