

POLITICAL MONITOR NO.22

OFFICIAL MEDIA

UNION PEACE-MAKING WORK COMMITTEE HOLD PEACE TALKS WITH KNPP

The second Union level peace talks between the government and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) took place in Loikaw, Kayah State on 20 June. The two sides touched on a future all-inclusive political dialogue, formation of joint monitoring group and technical teams for ensuring sustainable peace processes, cooperation in tasks of elimination of narcotic drugs, resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs), cooperative measures to be carried out in regional development undertakings and administrative matters. Another issue of concern called for the wider participation of locals and social organisations in implementing developmental projects and for the government to adhere to a process which is transparent with responsibility and accountability to ensure that ethnic minority members see the benefits of business development projects in their areas.

The government's chief peace negotiator Minister Aung Min said that the President intended to invite eminent persons including UN Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-moon to reaffirm initial ceasefire agreements with national race groups in the coming months and to sign a nationwide ceasefire agreement in the presence of them; that it was a move to bring about an eternal peace through the ceasefire agreement with no turning back. *(Please see Appendix A for full text of 8-point agreement signed between the Government and the KNPP).*¹

PRESIDENT THEIN SEIN RECEIVES PAUL WOLFOWITZ AND PARTY

President U Thein Sein received a delegation led by former World Bank President and former U.S Deputy Secretary of Defence Dr Paul Wolfowitz on 14 June in Naypyitaw. The two cordially exchanged views on investments, establishment of factories and workshops that can create more job opportunities, development of small and medium enterprises and human resources development in Burma. Mr Wolfowitz and party also held meetings with Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Lt-Gen Wai Lwin of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and the two sides touched on the Burmese government's political, economic and administrative reforms, cooperation between the government and Tatmadaw on peace and stability and promotion and for national races and development of small enterprises.²

PRESIDENT U THEIN SEIN RECEIVES SPEAKER OF THAI PARLIAMENT

Speaker of Thai Parliament and House of Representatives Mr Somsak Kiatsuranont and party called on Burmese President Thein Sein on 19 June. The two exchanged views on strengthening of friendly relations between the two countries as well as two armed forces, the implementation of Dawei Special Economic Zone as well as demarcation of boundary between the two countries.

¹ Union Peace-making Work Committee, KNPP hold peace talks for second time – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-20-red.pdf> (NLM) 20 June 2013 (p.1)/
Second round of Union-Level Peace Talks between Union Peace-making Work Committee and KNPP Concludes – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-21-red.pdf> (NLM) 21 June 2013 (p.16)/
Union Peace-Making Committee, KNPP agree to push ahead with nationwide ceasefire accord – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-21-red.pdf> (NLM) 21 June 2013 (p.16)

² Myanmar would help foreign investors the most possible degree: President – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-15-red.pdf> (NLM) 15 June 2013 (p.1)/
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defence – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-15-red.pdf> (NLM) 15 June 2013 (p. 16)/
Lt-Gen Wai Lwin receives Former World Bank President and Former US Deputy Secretary of Defence – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-16-red.pdf> (NLM) 16 June 2013 (p. 2)

KOREAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER CALLS ON PRESIDENT

Korean Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Strategy and Finance Mr. Hyun Oh-Seok also called on President Thein Sein on 19 June. They discussed infrastructural development, promotion and cooperation between the two countries in services, natural resources and technology sectors.³

LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER THURA SHWE MANN VISITS US

At the invitation of US House of Representatives and the Obama Administration a Myanmar parliamentary delegation led by Speaker of the Lower House Thura Shwe Mann paid an official visit to the US from 8 to 18 June. He met members of the US Senate and House of Representatives, opposition leaders, former Congress members and officials from the US State Department. The Speaker said the visit of his delegation was aimed at promoting friendship and cooperation between Myanmar and the US and learning the democratic system and experiences in the US and its democratic system. He pledged that Myanmar would continue to work to achieve unity of all national races, national reconciliation, rule of law and community peace and gaining permanent peace in the country. US senators and representatives also pledged to support the on-going reform process in Myanmar. The Lower House Speaker also met with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at UN headquarters in New York on 14 June. In his meeting, Ban praised the progress of recent reforms and also urged Burmese government in resolving communal violence as well as freeing of political prisoners.⁴

MYANMAR-EU FORUM HELD FOR FIRST TIME

The first Myanmar-EU Forum was held from 17-18 June in Naypyitaw. At the opening ceremony, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Thant Kyaw remarked that relations and cooperation between Myanmar and EU has become important in translating Myanmar's reforms into a success. That is why the high level dialogues between Myanmar and EU were held. He also welcomed the recent EU initiative in securing Myanmar to the re-admittance of Trade Preferences recently and that the forum would serve as the first basic step in promoting better relations between Myanmar and EU. Chief of Operations of the European External Action Service Mr David O'Sullivan of EU in his remarks said that the relations between EU and Myanmar had reached a higher level of cooperation and more coordination between Myanmar and the EU. The forum discussed ongoing cooperation and priorities for the future, focusing on the implementation of the March 2013 joint statement on "Building a Lasting EU-Myanmar Partnership" made by President U Thein Sein and President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy and President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso. The two sides also agreed to convene a similar meeting in Brussels next year. (*Please see Appendix B for full text of Joint-Press Release issued by Myanmar and EU*).⁵

³ President U Thein Sein receives Speaker of Thai Parliament and Thai House of Representatives and party –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-20-red.pdf> (NLM) 20 June 2013 (p. 1)/

President U Thein Sein receives ROK Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Hyun Oh-Seok –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-20-red.pdf> (NLM) 20 June 2013 (p. 9)

⁴ Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann holds talks with senators, representatives in US –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-20-red.pdf> (NLM) 20 June 2013 (p. 16 & 9)/

Arrangements made to review existing laws including the Constitution: Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-21-red.pdf> (NLM) 21 June 2013 (p.1 & 8)

⁵ Myanmar-EU Forum held for first time –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-19-red.pdf> (NLM) 19 June 2013 (p. 9)/

Myanmar, EU discuss promotion of bilateral relations –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-18-red.pdf> (NLM) 18 June 2013 (p. 5)/

EU-Myanmar trade cooperation discussed –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-19-red.pdf> (NLM) 19 June 2013 (p. 5)/

Myanmar-EU Forum Joint Press Release –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-20-red.pdf> (NLM) 20 June 2013 (p. 16)

UK MINISTER MEETS PRESS AFTER FOUR-DAY VISIT

UK's International Development Minister Mr Alan Duncan and party visited Rakhine and Kachin States during his recent visit to Burma. On 18 June, the visiting Mr Duncan and party accompanied by Rakhine State government officials inspected rehabilitation and development tasks in Sittway and Myebon townships. The delegation was briefed by the Chief Minister for Rakhine State on works being implemented to assist those affected the communal clashes in June and October 2012.

At a press conference held after his visit, Mr Duncan said that his government would provide an additional £1.5 million of humanitarian support for people displaced by the conflict in Kachin State. During his visit, Alan Duncan met government ministers, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, ethnic leaders and civil society groups and discussed the on-going peace process and the UK's role in providing development aid to the country.⁶

UNOFFICIAL MEDIA

ETHNIC WORKING GROUP PRESENTS DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS

After being shrouded in secrecy for months, the long-awaited draft framework for the planned nationwide political dialogue was disclosed at a recent meeting in Chiangmai. Padoh Kwe Htoo Win, one of the presenters, said U Aung Min, head of the MPC and Naypyitaw's chief negotiator, was present at the occasion, which took place on 13 May in Rangoon. Included in the draft entitled "Comprehensive National Peace and Ceasefire Agreement" are:

- A 15-point common principles (including Panglong Agreement, non-secession and inclusivity)
- A 14-point nationwide ceasefire accord (including establishment of Military Code of Conduct, Joint Ceasefire Committee and liaison offices)
- An 6-point framework agreement for political dialogue (including setting up of a joint National Dialogue Steering Committee and holding of National Dialogue Conference)
- A 9-point transitional arrangement (including time frame, empowerment of vulnerable groups and land reform issues)
- Scope of participation (900 participants from government, political parties and ethnic armed movements)
- A 9-point dialogue issues (including constitutional reforms, security reforms, land issues, drug eradication, IDP/refugee issues, language and cultural rights and media issues)
- Military Code of Conduct (as drafted by the Karen National Union)

Also present at the occasion were two representatives from the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS): Sai La and Sai Ngeun, Harn Yawnghwe, Executive-Director of Brussels-based Euro Burma Office (EBO), and Hkun Htun Oo, leader of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD).

⁶ UK minister meets press after four-day visit –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-21-red.pdf> (NLM) 21 June 2013 (p. 8)/

British Minister of State for International Development, Deputy Border Affairs Minister inspect rehabilitation tasks in Rakhine State –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-21-red.pdf> (NLM) 21 June 2013 (p. 9)/

British Minister calls on international community to work together to tackle Burma's forgotten crises –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/british-minister-calls-on-international-community-to-work-together-to-tackle-burmas-forgotten-crises> (DFID) 18 June 2013

According to other sources:

- It was initially agreed that the national dialogue conference should be a joint undertaking
- The MPC is also drafting its own framework

The government announced in Naypyitaw on 10 June that a nationwide ceasefire agreement is to be signed after the Kachin issue is resolved and is to be followed by an all inclusive union conference.

The WGEC draft is the result of the resolutions reached at the Ethnic Nationalities Conference, 14-16 September 2012, when a 5-stage roadmap was adopted:

- Drafting of framework for political dialogue
- Negotiating and reaching agreement with the government on the draft framework
- Holding state level conferences
- Holding an inter-state conference
- Holding national conference for a national accord

The Working Group for Ethnic Coordination (WGEC) is made up of representatives from ethnic armed movements, which include member organizations of the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), and civil society organizations.⁷ (Please read attachment for further details of: [the Comprehensive Union Peace Ceasefire Agreement](#))

KACHIN PARLIAMENT CALLS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN PEACE TALKS

Kachin State Parliament called for public participation in the peace talks between the government and Kachin Independence Organization (KIO). To ensure eternal peace in the country, a proposal to form the peace-making committee involving tribal representatives, city elders and MPs representing national races has been submitted to the Kachin State Parliament. Although all the MPs agreed to the proposal, it has not been implemented yet. The proposal was submitted by MP Chan Tan Khin of Naung Cho Constituency No. 1. He said, "All people living in the Kachin State suffered from the war; it is not just the Kachin people who did. Those from far-away areas have come here to discuss peace issue. Tribal representatives and Ministers for National Races Affairs should at least be able to listen to what the government and KIO are talking. Suggestions and ideas of the public can achieve desired peace more quickly." MP Chan believes all armed groups, including the military, represent the public and they will definitely serve for the public well being and suggested this for the sake of eternal peace within the Kachin State.⁸

RCSS DELEGATION MEETS SHAN STATE GOVT IN TAUNGGYI

The RCSS delegation led by General Yawd Serk met senior officials from the regional government on 20 June in Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State. During the meeting, the two sides discussed matters related to ceasefire agreement as well as future development projects for the Shan State. The RCCS leader also met leaders from the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) and members of Shan

⁷ Ethnic working group presents draft framework for political negotiations – http://www.english.panglong.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5467:ethnic-working-group-presents-draft-framework-for-political-negotiations&catid=85:politics&Itemid=266 (S.H.A.N.) 20 June 2013

⁸ Kachin parliament calls for public engagement in peace talks – <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/2510-kachin-parliament-calls-for-public-engagement-in-peace-talks> (Eleven News Media) 16 June 2013

Literature and Cultural Committee's (SLCC) on 18 June to discuss cooperation and promotion of unity among Shan ethnic nationals.⁹

NLD, ETHNIC PARTIES UNITE IN PUSH FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM BEFORE 2015 ELECTION

Leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) Aung Sun Suu Kyi, met leaders from five major ethnic political parties in a push to amend the constitution ahead of general elections in 2015. At the same time, they agreed that a change to the electoral system is not necessary in the near future.

According to Aye Thar Aung, leader of the Arakan League for Democracy (ALD), a meeting was held with five of the United Nationalities Alliance (UNA) member parties on 18 June Tuesday where they agreed on the need for constitutional and legal change. The groups united behind the NLD in unanimously rejecting a proportional representation (PR) system, acknowledging that despite the flaws of the current 'first-past-the-post' system, a PR system would likely cause more problems for the ethnic minorities.

During the two-hour meeting, Suu Kyi emphasized the importance of gradually reducing the 25 percent of seats currently held by the military, as well as addressing other outstanding contradictions in the 2008 constitution. The member of the UNA reiterated the importance of introducing the federal model, giving ethnic states increased autonomy. However both Suu Kyi and the ethnic party leaders conceded that the transition will likely play out slowly.

Along with the NLD's Aung San Suu Kyi, the five parties represented at the meeting included the Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD), the Arakan League for Democracy (ALD), All Mon Regions Democracy Party (AMDP), the Zomi National Congress, and the Karen National Congress for Democracy. It is also the first time Aung Sun Suu Kyi has met with the UNA party leaders and they agreed to meet frequently in the future.¹⁰

YAWD SERK MEETS AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Lt-Gen. Yawdserk, chairman of the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) met Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of National League for Democracy (NLD) on 15 June and the 2 leaders discussed the on-going peace process; the creation of a federal union and eradication of drugs. Suu Kyi told the Shan armed group leader to always keep in touch with the NLD party and to inform her over the situation in the RCSS/SSA area and that she also wanted to submit the issues and requirements of this area to the Parliament.¹¹

CLASHES BETWEEN BURMESE ARMY AND KIA

Fresh hostilities between the government and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) broke out in Bhamo, Kachin State, the latest in a series of flare ups since the two sides met in May for peace talks. The two separate clashes took place on June 18 and 19 in areas controlled by the KIA. The first clash happened on 18 June evening and lasted about 15 minutes while the second clash took place

⁹ RCSS delegation meets Shan State Govt in Taunggyi – http://www.english.panglong.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5468:rcss-delegation-meets-shan-state-govt-in-taunggyi&catid=85:politics&Itemid=266 (S.H.A.N.) 20 June 2013

¹⁰ NLD, ethnic parties unite in push for constitutional reform before 2015 election – <http://mizzima.com/news-91481/prisoner-watch/9559-nld-ethnic-parties-unite-in-push-for-constitutional-reform-before-2015-election> (Mizzima) 20 June 2013/
Suu Kyi, Ethnic Leaders to Work toward Federal Union – <http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/37767> (Irrawaddy) 18 June 2013

¹¹ Yawd Serk meets Aung San Suu Kyi – http://www.english.panglong.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5462:yawdserk-meets-aung-san-suukyi&catid=85:politics&Itemid=266 (S.H.A.N.) 17 June 2013

19 June (Wednesday) morning and lasted a little bit more than 20 minutes, said a KIA officer from the group's 3rd Brigade.

On June 14-15, fighting was reported between government troops and the joint forces of ethnic Kachin, Shan and Palaung armed groups known as the Taaung National Liberation Army (TNLA). On June 15, the TNLA claimed that four government soldiers were killed during the recent clashes in Shan State's Kutkai Township. The TNLA is believed to have a strategic military alliance with both the KIA and the Shan State Progress Party, formerly known as the Shan State Army-North (SSA-North), another ethnic armed group.¹²

ANALYSIS

The ceasefire agreement between the government and KNPP, Aung San Suu Kyi's meeting with RCSS leader Yawd Serk and receiving leaders of 5 ethnic parties are indeed positive signs of progress. The discussions on federalism and amending the existing 2008 constitution are now gaining momentum as the country prepares for the elections in 2015. Currently, it would seem that talks are moving smoothly and political parties with different backgrounds have become allies. Whether such informal groupings of political parties are able to maintain their shared values remains to be seen. Similarly, the submission of the long-awaited "Comprehensive National Peace and Ceasefire Agreement" draft to the government by ethnic groups could become a key initiative in ending decades of fighting. While no immediate response has been made by the government on the contents of the National Peace Agreement, it has however willingness to hold a meeting with national race groups and to sign a nation-wide ceasefire. It remains to be seen as to how this peace initiative will unfold in the coming months.

That being said, the continued fighting between the Kachin Independent Army (KIA) and government troops once again is putting to test whether the political transition underway in Myanmar is sustainable and more importantly achievable. While the signing of ceasefire agreements between the government and ethnic armed groups has been achieved on one hand, the actual implementation has become a major challenge on the other. And in order to avoid such skirmishes, it will be necessary to establish an effective monitoring mechanism as well as public participation in the peace talks will become key components in implementing the peace process and ending decades of fighting in Myanmar.

¹² Burma army and KIA battle in southern Kachin state – <http://www.kachinnews.com/news/2527-burma-army-and-kia-battle-in-southern-kachin-state.html> (KNG) 21 June 2013/
Weekend Clashes Reported Near IDP shelters in Kachin State – <http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/38339> (Irrawaddy) 24 June 2013

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

AGREEMENT SIGNED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND KNPP

The Union Peace-Making Committee and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) have entered into an agreement, vowing to push ahead with nationwide ceasefire accord. The committee and KNPP held negotiations on 19 and 20 June in Loikaw with Vice-Chairman of the committee Union Minister U Aung Min and Vice-Chairman of KNPP Khu U Yal in attendance. The two parties released an eight-point agreement today, which is as follows:

- (a) To push ahead with nationwide ceasefire accord and continue efforts for all-inclusive political dialogue;
- (b) The delegates of the two parties have discussed military affairs and the results have been more constructive and progressive and agreed to continue to discuss military matters in next rounds of discussions;
- (c) The two parties agreed to form joint monitoring committee as follows:
 - (1) Two committee members to be nominated by Kayah State government, two by KNPP and six righteous community elders, totalling ten members;
 - (2) Personnel of the two sides in coordination to adopt the terms of reference (TOR) to be able to cooperate with civil society organizations (CSOs), individuals and local NGOs;
 - (3) The two parties not to harm, threat or take illegal actions against monitoring individuals and organizations;
- (d) To allow the public and social organizations to observe the new major projects to be implemented in Kayah State including New Village Project; the implementation process to be transparent with responsibility and accountability and the government and persons concerned to guarantee local people do not suffer loss;
- (e) The two parties to coordinate measures on clearing of landmines in places to where internally displaced persons (IDPs) will be relocated;
- (f) The two parties to coordinate a pilot project in Dawtakhe in Shadaw Township for resettlement of IDPs;
- (g) The two parties to form technical teams to undertake policy agreements;
- (h) The government and KNPP to cooperate for regional development.¹³

Appendix B:

JOINT PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY EU-MYANMAR

The first Myanmar-EU Forum convened on 17-18 June 2013 in Nay Pyi Taw. It was co-chaired by U Thant Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and Mr David O'Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer of the European External Action Service.

A Working Group on Trade and Investment and a Working Group on Cooperation, established on the occasion of the Forum, also met and reported to plenary.

¹³ Union Peace-Making Committee, KNPP agree to push ahead with nationwide ceasefire accord – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-21-red.pdf> (NLM) 21 June 2013 (p.16)

The Forum discussed ongoing cooperation and priorities for the future, focusing on the implementation of the Joint Statement by President U Thein Sein, President of European Council Herman Van Rompuy and President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso of the 5 March 2013 on “Building a Lasting EU-Myanmar Partnership”.

In that regard, the meeting discussed ways to support the transition of Myanmar and meet related challenges. It was agreed *inter alia* to establish a bilateral dialogue on human rights, and to consult in the coming months on the practical modalities for this. It was noted also that the Task Force meeting to be held in Myanmar on 14-15 November 2013 would be an excellent opportunity for a wide-ranging and productive discussion on all aspects of EU-Myanmar cooperation.

The two sides also exchanged views on political and economic developments in Myanmar and in the EU, as well as on regional and international issue.

Both sides viewed the Forum as a useful mechanism to advance bilateral relations and agreed to convene again next year in Brussels.¹⁴

¹⁴ Myanmar-EU Forum Joint Press Release –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/NLM-2013-06-20-red.pdf> (NLM) 20 June 2013 (p. 16)