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## POLITICAL MONITOR NO. 2

### OFFICIAL MEDIA

#### GOVERNMENT AND KNU SIGN HISTORIC PEACE AGREEMENT

The Government (Kayin State Level Peace-making Group) and the Kayin (Karen) National Union (KNU) signed a five-point initial agreement on 12 January 2012 to be implemented as preliminary tasks and agreed to discuss an 11-point preliminary agreement submitted by the KNU at the Union level. The signing ceremony was attended by the Chief Negotiator of the Government's Peace Making Team Railways Minister U Aung Min as well as KNU representatives led by General Saw Mutue Sae Poe. In addition, the President's Office sent an order to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) calling for all military camps and mobile columns to suspend attacks to promote confidence and trust.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Unofficial Media*

The agreement marks the end of more than 6 decades of uninterrupted armed resistance by Burma's oldest ethnic armed group. Under the agreement, the first since the KNU began its struggle for Karen autonomy shortly after Burma achieved independence from British colonial rule in 1948, the two sides will initiate a ceasefire and allow each other to conduct unarmed patrols in their respective territories. The KNU will also be allowed to set up liaison offices in government-controlled areas.<sup>2</sup>

The 11 points of the KNU's proposal are:

- (1) Establish a nationwide ceasefire and immediately cease military operations in ethnic areas.
- (2) Guarantee the human rights and safety of all civilians.
- (3) Build trust among the people.
- (4) Support the basic needs of the people and ensure that development projects have the full participation and support of local villagers.
- (5) Allow national media outlets to participate in the peace processes, in order to provide accurate information about developments.
- (6) Immediately stop forced labor, arbitrary taxation and extortion of villagers.
- (7) Release all political prisoners and provide solutions to settle land rights issue.
- (8) Set out principles for all parties to ensure a genuine peace process.
- (9) Ensure the legitimacy of representatives involved in negotiations, provide adequate time for their consultation with respective constituencies and establish a clear role for third parties.
- (10) Initiate a plan for monitoring and ensuring the transparency of the peace process.
- (11) Establish a flexible process that guarantees progress towards sustainable peace, and in which all parties speak straightforwardly and avoid using words that may be misinterpreted.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> State level peace-making group, KNU peace-making group sign initial agreement – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-14.pdf> (NLM) 14 January 2012 (p. 16) / Five-point initial agreements signed to restore peace with KNU / President orders to suspend attacks while building mutual understanding -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-14.pdf> (NLM) 14 January 2012 (p. 16)

<sup>2</sup> KNU, Govt Reach Historic Agreement -

[http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=22826](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=22826) (Irrawaddy) 12 January 2012

<sup>3</sup> KNU wants a transparent peace process -

<http://karennews.org/2012/01/knu-wants-a-transparent-peace-process.html/> (Karen News) 14 January 2012

## MANY PROMINENT POLITICAL PRISONERS RELEASED UNDER GOVERNMENT AMNESTY

The President granted an amnesty to 651 prisoners on 13 January 2012. The announcement was made in accordance with Section 401, Sub-section (1) of Code of Criminal Procedure as of 5th Waning of Pyatho, 1373 Myanmar Era with the aim of ensuring stability and eternal peace of the State, fostering national reconciliation, enabling them to participate in the political process, and on humanitarian grounds and turning them into the citizens to participate through whatever way they can in the nation-building tasks by realizing the magnanimity of the State.<sup>4</sup>

### *Unofficial Media*

According to Home Minister Lieutenant-General Ko Ko, a total of 302 political prisoners were given amnesty.<sup>5</sup> These included 88 Generation Students group leaders Min Ko Naing, Ko Ko Gyi, Htay Kywe and Min Zeya, as well as ethnic Shan leader Hkun Htun Oo and dissident monk U Gambira.<sup>6</sup>

## US SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR BURMA & US AMBASSADOR FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING VISIT BURMA

US Special Representative and Policy Coordinator for Burma Derek Mitchell and US Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons Luis CdeBaca made an official visit to Burma from 9 to 13 January 2012. During the visit, Special Representative Mitchell met Vice-President Thira Tin Aung Mint Oyo<sup>7</sup> and Union Election Commission Chairman U Tin Aye<sup>8</sup>, and with Ambassador CdeBaca also met Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin<sup>9</sup> and Minister for Home Affairs Lieutenant-General Ko Ko<sup>10</sup> in Nay Pyi Taw. They discussed matters related to improving bilateral ties and cooperation in mutual interest. It was Mitchell's 4th visit to Burma and was a follow-up to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit in December 2011. He last visited Burma in November 2011.<sup>11</sup>

### *Unofficial Media*

Ambassador CdeBaca said that greater accountability of Burmese government officials and military officers is needed to combat human trafficking in Burma and that one of the biggest obstacles to fighting human trafficking in Burma seems to be the archaic legal structure, especially in the villages and towns act, which allows civilian authorities to conscript labor for building projects and other activities.<sup>12</sup> Ambassador CdeBaca was in Burma to assess the human trafficking situation in the country and to explore opportunities to strengthen the government's anti- trafficking efforts and he

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty granted to 651 male and female prisoners in accordance with Section 401, Sub-section (1) of Code of Criminal Procedure aimed at enabling them to participate in national reconciliation and political processes –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 January 2012 (p. 1)

<sup>5</sup> Myanmar says 302 political prisoners freed in amnesty -

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/14/us-myanmar-amnesty-idUSTRE80D0IV20120114> (Reuters) 14 January 2012

<sup>6</sup> Political Dissidents Released in Govt Amnesty -

[http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=22828](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=22828) (Irrawaddy) 13 January 2012

<sup>7</sup> Vice-President Thiha Thura U Tin Aung Myint Oo receives US Special Rep -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-11.pdf> (NLM) 11 January 2012 (p. 1)

<sup>8</sup> US Special Rep meets UEC Chairman -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-11.pdf> (NLM) 11 January 2012 (p. 2)

<sup>9</sup> Myanmar, US to promote bilateral relations and cooperation -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-10.pdf> (NLM) 10 January 2012 (p. 2)

<sup>10</sup> Home Affairs Minister receives US guests -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-10.pdf> (NLM) 10 January 2012 (p. 8)

<sup>11</sup> Union FM receives US Special Representative -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-11-03.pdf>(NLM) 3 November 2011 (p. 16)

<sup>12</sup> Burma's 'archaic' laws enable human trafficking abuses -

<http://mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/6406-burmas-archaic-laws-enable-human-trafficking-abuses.html> (Mizzima) 13 January 2012

discussed with Burmese officials matters relating to transnational sex trafficking and improve labor conditions for workers.<sup>13</sup>

### **US REP CROWLEY IN BURMA, MEETS DEPUTY SPEAKER OF BURMA'S LOWER HOUSE**

A delegation led by United States House of Representatives member Joseph F. Crowley (D-NY) paid a call on Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa, at the Pyithu Hluttaw Committee Hall in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 January. They discussed and exchanged views on duties of Hluttaw, drafting law, implementation of people's desires and hopes by Hluttaw, cooperation with International Hluttaws and cooperation on ethnic affairs with respective organizations.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Unofficial Media*

Crowley, a congressman who has spearheaded sanctions aimed at pressuring Burma, made his first visit to Burma and he is the first member of the US House of Representatives in more than 12 years to travel there. He planned to meet government officials and opposition icon Aung San Suu Kyi as well as ethnic minority leaders on his two-day trip.<sup>15</sup>

### **DANISH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION MINISTER VISITS BURMA, ANNOUNCES MORE BORDER AID**

The Danish Minister for Development Cooperation Christian Friis Bach paid an official visit to Burma from 6 to 9 January 2012 and met government ministers.<sup>16</sup> Minister Bach also met the Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House)<sup>17</sup> and exchanged views on cooperation between Burma and EU in development sectors.

#### *Unofficial Media*

Minister Bach also met Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as well as other political leaders.<sup>18</sup> After returning from Burma, Bach stated that the Danish government plans to give more focus on assisting and aiding efforts within the border regions of the country.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Myanmar Vice President Meets US Special Envoy - <http://english.cri.cn/6966/2012/01/10/2724s675558.htm> (Xinhua) 10 January 2012

<sup>14</sup> Deputy Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives US House of Representatives - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 January 2012 (p. 1)

<sup>15</sup> Key US lawmaker heads to Myanmar - [http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jNF\\_B0gnS9LAcR9YoSRW5Lo7TyQA?docid=CNG.4e49b326c0b56a603281add8e86b2b2d.6e1](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jNF_B0gnS9LAcR9YoSRW5Lo7TyQA?docid=CNG.4e49b326c0b56a603281add8e86b2b2d.6e1) (AFP) 11 January 2012

<sup>16</sup> Dy Foreign Affairs Minister receives Danish Development Cooperation Minister - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-10.pdf> (NLM) 10 January 2012 (p.9) /

Minister for Border Affairs receives Danish Minister -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/Mirror2012-01-10.pdf> (Kyemon) 12 January 2012 (p. 2) /

Deputy Minister for Health Dr Win Myint meets Danish minister -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/Mirror2012-01-10.pdf> (Kyemon) 10 January 2012 (p. 8)

<sup>17</sup> Deputy Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa meets Japanese and Danish guests separately - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-10.pdf> (NLM) 10 January 2012 (p. 16)

<sup>18</sup> Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets Danish minister -

[http://eversion.news-eleven.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=319:daw-aung-san-suu-kyi-meets-danish-minister&catid=42:weekly-eleven-news&Itemid=109](http://eversion.news-eleven.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=319:daw-aung-san-suu-kyi-meets-danish-minister&catid=42:weekly-eleven-news&Itemid=109) (Eleven News Journal) 6 January 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Danish Govt to Focus on Burma's Borders -

[http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=22844](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=22844) (Irrawaddy) 13 January 2012

## BURMA'S COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF VISITS THAILAND

At the invitation of Commander-in-Chief General Tanasak Patimapragorn of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, a Burmese military delegation led by Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services General Min Hlaing visited Thailand from 9-13 January 2012. During his visit, the Burmese Armed Forces Chief met Thai Premier Yingluck Shinawatra and President of the Privy Council of Thailand General Prem Tinsulanonda. In his meeting with the Thai Prime Minister, General Min Aung Hlaing expressed thanks to the Thai people and the Royal Thai Armed Forces for their assistance to Burma during the Nargis Cyclone Disaster in 2008 and earthquake in Tachileik in 2010. The Thai Premier responded by praising the on-going democratization process in Burma and gave her assurances regarding the implementation of the Dawei Sea-Port Project near the Thai-Burma border.<sup>20</sup>

Army Chief Min Aung Hlaing also held separate meetings with Thai Defense Minister General Yutthasak Sasiprapa and General Tanasak Patimapragorn, Chief of Defense Forces of the Royal Thai Army and discussed matters related on improving issues along the countries' borders, transnational crimes as well as opening of additional border checkpoints close to the Dawei multi-billion industrial project. The Burmese military delegation also visited the Special Warfare Command in Lopburi Province (6) and Wing-7 Thai Air Force base located in Surathani Province.<sup>21</sup>

## DATE OF 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 SESSION OF UNION PARLIAMENT ANNOUNCED

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Regular Session of the First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) is set to convene on 31 January 2012 according to state-run media reports. The scheduled Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session will be the first parliamentary session to be convened in 2012 and is likely to take up a wide range of issues including the by-elections which have been fixed for 1 April 2012.<sup>22</sup> *(Please see Annex A for the full text of the announcement.)*

## ELECTION COMMISSION ISSUES RULES ON VACANT SEATS IN BY-ELECTIONS

The Union Election Commission (UEC) has issued rules for those planning to contest the upcoming by-elections in April 2012. Those contesting the by-elections are required to submit their personal histories together with other relevant documents to the respective election sub-commissions in order to enlist.<sup>23</sup> *(Please see Annex B for the full text of the announcement.)*

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<sup>20</sup> Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services General Min Aung Hlaing and party leave for Thailand - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-09.pdf> (NLM) 9 January 2012 (p. 1) / Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services General Min Aung Hlaing calls on Thai Prime Minister Ms Yingluck Shinawatra - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-12.pdf> (NLM) 12 January 2012 (p. 16) / Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services General Min Aung Hlaing meets President of Privy Council of Thailand - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-10.pdf> (NLM) 10 January 2012 (p. 8)

<sup>21</sup> Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services meets Thai Defense Minister - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-11.pdf> (NLM) 11 January 2012 (p. 9) / Commander-in-Chief calls on Chief of Defense Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-11.pdf> (NLM) 11 January 2012 (p. 8) / Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services visits Special Warfare Command - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-11.pdf> (NLM) 11 January 2012 (p. 8) / General Min Aung Hlaing visits Wing-7 of Royal Thai Air Force in Surathani Province of Thailand - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 January 2012 (p. 1 & 9) - The Commander-in-Chief of Defense was accompanied by Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Chief of Staff (Navy) Rear-Admiral Thura Thet Swe, Chief of Staff (Air) Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint, Commander of Eastern Command Maj-Gen Soe Htut, Commander of South- East Command Maj-Gen Tin Maung Win, Commander of Coastal Region Command Maj-Gen Khin Maung Htay senior military officers from the Ministry of Defense.

<sup>22</sup> Third regular session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to commence on 31 January - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-10.pdf> (NLM) 10 January 2012 (p. 1)

<sup>23</sup> Points to be followed in submitting candidature lists for vacant constituencies - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-10.pdf> (NLM) 10 January 2012 (p. 9)

## **VOTERS URGED TO REGISTER WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

As the by-elections for 48 constituencies with vacancies for representatives in respective Hluttaws will be held on Sunday 1 April 2012, respective Ward and Village-Tract Sub-Commissions are preparing correct, up-to-date ballot lists, based on the previous ballot lists. Citizens who are 18 years of age on the election day and who are not disqualified by law, guest citizens, naturalized citizens or those holding temporary identity cards and those who are included in the ballot lists of the constituency concerned shall have the right to vote. As those who are qualified by law have the right to include in the ballot lists of the constituency concerned, a public notice has been issued for people to contact the ward or village-tract sub-commissions concerned so that their names can be included in the ballot lists. Parties are to cooperate in ensuring that the names of voters they have canvassed are included in their respective ballot lists.<sup>24</sup>

## **UNOFFICIAL MEDIA**

### **MON ARMED GROUP TO COMMENCE CEASEFIRE TALKS WITH GOVERNMENT**

According to the Mon Peace Agency, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Burmese government have agreed to convene peace talks in Moulmein, the state capital of Mon State between 25-31 January 2012. "The reply of the NMSP has been reported to Chief Minister (of Mon State)." said Mon Peace Agency member Nai Soe Myint, but that the date for holding the peace talks has yet to be confirmed. The State-level Negotiating Team led by Railway Minister U Aung Min and a team of NMSP's representatives led by Nai Hong Sar met each other in Thailand December 2011. The NMSP has previously held a ceasefire agreement with the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), which collapsed in 2011. However, at present there is no gunfire between the two groups.<sup>25</sup>

### **SOROS TO ESTABLISH OPEN SOCIETY OFFICE IN BURMA**

US billionaire investor George Soros said he has agreed to set up an official base for his philanthropic work after meetings with President U Thein Sein and opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. According to the Open Society Foundations, Soros visited Burma from 26 December 2011 to 3 January 2012 and said that he was encouraged to see the changes taking place inside the country. Formerly known as the Open Society Institute, Open Society Foundations have funded a number of projects in Burma since 1994, with a focus on increasing international awareness of conditions in the country and providing assistance to marginalized ethnic minorities, women, and youth.<sup>26</sup>

## **ANALYSIS**

President U Thein Sein's government has taken a major step towards national reconciliation by initiating a cease-fire agreement with the Karen National Union (KNU) as well as releasing 651 more prisoners, including prominent political prisoners under an amnesty. The ability to reach an agreement between the government and the KNU has provided an opportunity and a window of hope to bring an end to the on-going ethnic armed conflicts which has plagued the country for over half a century. Union-level talks are now expected to iron out a durable and long-lasting peace agreement. Burma's political landscape has changed in an unprecedented manner. President U Thein Sein has surprised many by implementing and introducing changes unlike many of his predecessors. The coming months will show how serious the new government in Nay Pyi Taw is in its commitment to reform.

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<sup>24</sup> For eligible voters to be able to include ballot lists –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-10.pdf> (NLM) 10 January 2012 (p. 9)

<sup>25</sup> NMSP agree to commence ceasefire talks with government - <http://monnews.org/?p=3689> (Mon News) 13 January 2012

<sup>26</sup> Statement on George Soros's Visit to Burma –

<http://www.soros.org/newsroom/news/george-soros-burma-visit-20120105> (Open Society) 4 January 2012

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A:**

**Third regular session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to commence  
on 31 January**

*Pyidaungsu Hluttaw of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar issued  
Announcement No.1/ 2012 dated 9-1-2012.*

**Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

**Pyidaungsu Hluttaw**

**Announcement No.1/2012**

**1st Waning of Pyatho, 1373 ME**

**(9th January, 2012)**

**Third regular session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw summoned<sup>27</sup>**

In accord with Section 79 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 13 of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law, it is hereby announced that the third regular session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw shall be convened at 10 am on 8th Waxing of Tabodwe, 1373 ME (31st January, 2012) Tuesday in Nay Pyi Taw.

**Sd/  
Khin Aung Myint  
Speaker  
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw**

### **Appendix B:**

**Points to be followed in submitting candidature lists for vacant constituencies<sup>28</sup>**

As candidature lists for vacant constituencies of the respective Hluttaws can be submitted from 16-1-2012 to 31-1-2012, a notice has been issued that the points mentioned under are to be followed in accord with the law in submitting the candidature lists.

- (a) Citizens, regardless of gender and religion, who are qualified by the respective Hluttaw Election Law Section 8 are eligible to stand for election.
- (b) Those who are disqualified by the respective Hluttaw Election Law Section 10 shall not be eligible to stand for election.
- (c) Hluttaw candidates are to enlist at Nay Pyi Taw (or) District concerned (or) Self-Administered Region/Self-Administered Area Sub-commission which are in the areas of the constituencies they wish to compete in. [Rule 18 (a)]
- (d) Election admission registration fees are to be paid to Myanma Economic Bank (Branch) where election sub-commission concerned is seated. Account number is that of sub-commission concerned. [Rule 18 (c)]
- (e) The following documents are to be included in submitting name lists of Hluttaw candidates.

<sup>27</sup> Third regular session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to commence on 31 January -  
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-10.pdf> (NLM) 10 January 2012 (p. 1)

<sup>28</sup> Points to be followed in submitting candidature lists for vacant constituencies –  
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2012-01-10.pdf> (NLM) 10 January 2012 (p. 9)

- (1) Two originals of Hluttaw candidate name list form (6) (*Endorsement showing that the signature made before the judge is correct included*)
- (2) Two CVs written in accord with the instructions of the commission.
- (3) The original receipt showing that election admission registration fees have been paid.
- (4)** Evidence showing that the applicant is a national citizen.
- (5) Two sets of Form (7) or Form (7-A) saying that a person himself or another has been appointed as an election representative.

**Remarks:** A Hluttaw candidate shall not be permitted to enlist in more than one constituency at the same time. [Rule 18(c)].

**Union Election Commission**