

POLITICAL MONITOR No. 23

OFFICIAL MEDIA

STATE COUNSELLOR ADDRESSES UPDJC MEETING

A two-day Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) was convened in Nay Pyi Taw on 28 October with an address by the chairperson of the UPDJC, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi. In her speech, the State Counsellor said that the goal of the committee is to achieve peace, which means an end to conflicts. Prosperity is possible, she said, only when peace has been restored. Thus, the major responsibility of the committee should be to end conflicts and to build a prosperous Myanmar. Ending conflicts involves all the armed forces, she added.¹ (*Please see Appendix A and B for address made by of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and UPDJC Vice Chairman and KNU Secretary-General Pado Kwe Htoo Win*).

FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONWIDE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT HELD

A ceremony to celebrate the first anniversary of signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 October. The ceremony was opened with an address by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre. The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Saw Mutu Sae Poe, Chairman of KNU also addressed the meeting. Chairman of the Peace Commission Dr Tin Myo Win and General Secretary of the KNU Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win read out the summary of the NCA. The ceremony was attended by President Htin Kyaw, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice Presidents Myint Swe and Henry Van Thio, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Win Myint, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than, Union Chief Justice Htun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal Myo Nyunt, Chairman of the Union Election Commission Hla Thein, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice Senior General Soe Win, leaders from 8 EAO signatory groups to the NCA, Union Ministers, chairmen and members of the parliamentary committees, members of the Union Peace Working Committee, members of the Peace Commission and supporting committees, MPs, military representatives, representatives of the political parties, diplomats and NCA witnesses and official. (*Please see Appendix C, D and E for full text of statements by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Service Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing and Chairman of the KNU Saw Mutu Sae Poe*).²

UNFC LIKELY TO TAKE PART IN POLITICAL DIALOGUES

United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) is likely to participate in the national-level political dialogues, according to Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee Secretary Hla Maung Shwe. "We are negotiating with the DPN (Delegation for Political Negotiations) on 7 or 8 November. The Peace Commission of the government is also negotiating with them on 9 or 10 October. As both sides, have

¹ Exchange Views and End Conflicts: State Counsellor addresses UPDJC meeting – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-29-red.pdf> (GNLM) 29 October 2016 (p. 1 &3)/
Unity Within Our Reach: Negotiations only way to find a solution – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-30-red.pdf> (GNLM) 30 October 2016 (p. 1)

² First Anniversary of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement held – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-16-red.pdf> (GNLM) 16 October 2016 (p. 1)/
Let Bygones Be Bygones – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-16-red.pdf> (GNLM) 16 October 2016 (p. 1 &3)/
Greetings of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the first anniversary of the NCA – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-16-red.pdf> (GNLM) 16 October 2016 (p. 5)/
Saw Mutu Sae Poe, Chairman of KNU, extends greetings at the first anniversary of signing NCA – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-16-red.pdf> (GNLM) 16 October 2016 (p. 2)

paved the way to continue the peace process, the UnFC is likely to participate in the process,” Hla Maung Shwe said. Efforts are being speeded up to pave the way for non-signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) to sign the agreement as only signatories to the NCA can participate in the national-level political dialogues, said the Secretary of UPDJC Dr Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong, a representative of the ethnic armed groups. “Under the provisions 21 and 22, it is necessary for participants to be signatories to the NCA. Political dialogues are based on the NCA. Negotiations the DPN, which represents the UNFC, are underway so that they can sign the NCA,” he said. Dr Salai made the statement on the third day of the fourth framework review meeting for national-level political dialogues held at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon. “Representatives of the DPN submitted their talking points and they said that they are trying their utmost to participate in the process. They requested us to understand their situation. I think the negotiation will conclude tomorrow”, Dr Salai Hlian Hmung Sakhong said. He also added that it is necessary for the UPDJC to approve the outcome of the framework review meeting. National-level political dialogues are scheduled to start in November and terms of reference for them have been drawn. Yesterday’s meeting was attended by 14 representatives of the government, 17 representatives of the ethnic armed groups and 14 representatives of political parties.³

AUNG SAN SUU KYI MAKES OFFICIAL VISIT TO JAPAN

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and Myanmar’s State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi in a meeting on 3 November agreed to cooperate in efforts to end ethnic conflict in Myanmar. The two held talks on several issues including bilateral relations, challenges in the region, ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty-CTBT and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) to be hosted by Myanmar in 2017. Referring to recent reports of deadly attacks on border guard posts by violent armed attackers in Rakhine State, Kishida told Aung San Suu Kyi “any sort of violence should not be tolerated, and I welcome (your) efforts for the peace and stability of Rakhine state.” Aung San Suu Kyi said the situation in Rakhine state is extremely delicate and needs to be addressed with caution, adding that the government is dealing with it under the principle of the rule of law. In the talks, Kishida said Japan would provide a new passenger boat to Myanmar with the aim of supporting its efforts to ease inter-communal tensions in Rakhine, the ministry said. San Suu Kyi told Kishida that the ship will not only help transport people in Rakhine but also contribute to the development of the state, which faces the Indian Ocean. There is a dire need for ships in Myanmar because they are often the primary mode of transport. There have also been several deadly sinkings in recent years, so safe boats are in demand, a senior Japanese official said earlier. Kishida also welcomed Myanmar’s ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in September, agreed with the State Counsellor to promote the enforcement of the treaty.

In a separate meeting, Japanese Prime Minister Abe also pledged to contribute about 800 billion yens (US\$7.73 billion) over five years to aid in the democratizing country and Myanmar’s national reconciliation efforts. Japanese Premier Abe, said his country fully supported Myanmar’s transition to a modern democracy.” I want to reiterate my respect for the nation-building (you) are carrying out under the universal values we share -- freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law,” Abe said, adding that Japan hopes to use Aung San Suu Kyi’s visit as an opportunity to “dramatically develop” bilateral ties. The State Counsellor expressed thanks to the Japanese government and the people, pledging that aid from Japan will be spent on the peace process, ensuring transparency. She also thanked Japan to provide aid for the private investment sector, and asked for assistance in sectors including agri-culture, transportation, electricity and human resources.⁴

³ UNFC likely to take part in political dialogues –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-21-red.pdf> (GNLM) 21 October 2016 (p. 1&9)

⁴ Rakhine state issue is delicate and needs to be addressed with caution: Aung San Suu Kyi –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-11-04-red.pdf> (GNLM) 4 November 2016 (p. 1&4/)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF DEFENCE SERVICES PAYS GOODWILL VISIT TO CHINA

At the invitation of the Chief of Joint Staff and member of the Central Military Commission of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) General Fang Fenghui of the People's Republic of China a Myanmar delegation led by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing arrived Kunming on 28 October to begin a goodwill visit. The Myanmar delegation visited Fa Men Si (Famen Temple) in Bao Ji, Shan Xi Province and attended the dinner hosted by the Commander of Shan Xi Province Military Region Maj-Gen Gao Dongfu. Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing also met with Minister of Public Security of China Guo Sheng Kun at the latter's office on 2 November and discussed security affairs on over 2,000 km long border, security cooperation along the Mekong river, drug eradication and human trafficking, transnational crimes and anti-terrorism cooperation. The Chinese minister hosted a luncheon in honor of the Myanmar defence services delegation. Senior General Min Aung Hlaing also met with the Political Officer for the Southern Command in Guangdong Province General Wei Liang.⁵

MINISTERS, DIPLOMATS AND UN OFFICIALS VISIT RAKHINE STATE

At the request of the UN representative who coordinates humanitarian aid, ambassadors to Myanmar, UNDP representatives and government Ministers led by the Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Rakhine State Chief Minister and Foreign Minister Kyaw Tin visited Rakhine State on 2 November to assess the situation after a series of armed attacks on the villages of Maungtaw and Rathetaung Townships, Rakhine State on 9 October. Union Ministers and Rakhine State Chief Minister briefed the diplomats and UNDP representatives on the situation following the attacks which happened in Maungtaw and Rathetaung townships, and explained that the Government was implementing the necessary measures to resolve crisis in accordance with laws and rules. The authorities stated that accusations of Islamist genocidal cases, and offences of arresting Muslims without evidence, rape cases and burning of homes in villages were committed by the forces are contrary to the reports.

Afterwards, the diplomats and Union ministers went to the Village of Warpeik and viewed the site where houses were burnt. During the visit to the Kyikanpyin Village, where the attack happened, Muslim villagers met with the ministers and diplomats. The visiting entourage also met with Muslim resident's from Zinpaingnyar Village and also visited Pyaugpaik, where five members of the Tatmadaw were killed in the attack, and met with Muslim residents living near the village.⁶

UEC PLEDGES FREE AND FAIR APRIL ELECTION

The Union Election Commission (UEC) held a meeting with 70 political parties on the holding of the By-Election on 1 April 2017, pledging that the upcoming election would be free and fair. The Chairman of the UEC Hla Thein at a meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 24 October said that the respective election sub-commissions are to launch door-to-door scrutiny activities in vacant constituencies for the correctness of voter lists. The Chairman said it was imperative for voters to take an active part in these activities.

Japan offers 800 billion yens to Myanmar to assist in development, peace-making –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-11-03-red.pdf> (GNLM) 3 November 2016 (p. 1 &3)

⁵ C-in-C of Defence Services pays goodwill visit to China –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-29-red.pdf> (GNLM) 29 November 2016 (p. 2)/
C-in-C of Defence Services arrives in Beijing –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-31-red.pdf> (GNLM) 31 October 2016 (p. 3)/
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing wraps up China visit –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-11-04-red.pdf> (GNLM) 4 November 2016 (p. 1&4)

⁶ False accusations on violating human rights exposed to the world –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-11-03-red.pdf> (GNLM) 3 November 2016 (p. 1 &2)/
Authorities clarify ground situations in Rakhine –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-11-02-red.pdf> (GNLM) 2 November 2016 (p. 3)

“It requires us to form an observatory surveillance committee enquiring as to whether political parties and candidates abide by election ethics or not. By-elections will be held above-board, to be free and fair elections with local and foreign observatory teams to be invited”, said Hla Thein. He noted that political parties also need to co-operate with election sub-commissions at all levels to ensure free and fair elections in accord with election law and election ethics. A vacant seat for the State Pyithu Hluttaw Representative of Nyaung Shwe Constituency 1, whose representative passed away, would be added to the previously announced 18 vacant constituencies to be held on 1 April. For respective parties to be able to nominate their candidates who will contest for vacant constituencies, the time schedule has been released in newspapers. In reply to suggestions on electoral processes made by political parties, Uec chairman clarified, “UEC has been dealing with matters on announcement of compiled voter lists, casting votes in advance, construction of polling booths, and weaknesses found in activities of ward and village tract election sub-commissions.”⁷

ELECTION COMMISSION SEEKS COOPERATION FROM MINISTRIES TO HOLD BY-ELECTION

The Union Election Commission (UEC) has urged relevant ministries to cooperate in preparation for holding an April-1 by-election. At the consultation meeting between the UEC and 7 ministries, UEC’s Chairman Hla Thein said respective election commissions at different levels are carrying out door-to-door scrutiny-cum-data collection. Hence, respective ministries are requested to co-operate in the activity. By-elections for 19 vacant parliamentary seats at different levels in respective constituencies is slated to be held on 1 April 2017, with the time schedule for the election process released. “It is clearly promulgated in the law to compile voter lists for by-elections based on the voter lists of 2015 general elections”, said the UEC Chair. Regarding casting votes in advance for voters who have been abroad with the permission of the government, arrangements will be made in consultation with the Foreign Ministry for a smooth process, he added. The UEC Chairman also called on the Ministry of Education to help election booths for the upcoming by-elections to be built in schools where previous election booths were located and to help teaching staff to perform when they oversee voting booths during elections. “Especially, local and foreign election observatory units are to be allowed to be free, fair and above-board by-elections 2017,” said Hla Thein. The Secretary of the UEC Tin Tun, explained in detail the working process under way and responsible officials from ministries pointed out weaknesses found in previous 2015 general elections and plans for their cooperation in the by-elections to come, according to their respective sectors. The Election Commission also announced on 2 November 2016, that effective from 2 November until 15 March 2017, people from home and abroad can apply to the Union Election Commission (UEC) for the right to observe by-elections for vacant parliamentary seats in respective constituencies to be held in April 2017.⁸

EU INJECTS FUNDING INTO MPF TRAINING ASSISTANCE

The European Union (EU) has committed 30 million Euros toward a five-year project titled ‘Support to the Reform of the Myanmar Police Force (2016-2021)’, it is learnt. The EU previously implemented a two-year capacity building project in December, 2013. However, that programme was cancelled before it could be completed, reportedly due to disagreements between EU trainers and the Ministry of Home Affairs and a lack of parliamentary oversight for the programme. Under the five-year project, police training programmes, crowd management, crime investigation and awareness of human rights and media relations will be upgraded and taught. A ceremony to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the Myanmar Police Force and the International and Ibero-American

⁷ UEC Pledges Free and Fair April Election – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-25-red.pdf> (GNLM) 25 October 2016 (p. 1&3)

⁸ Election commission seeks cooperation from ministries to hold by-election – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-27-red.pdf> (GNLM) 27 October 2016 (p. 3)/ UEC to accept applications for observing by-elections – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-11-03-red.pdf> (GNLM) 3 November 2016 (p. 3)

Foundation for Administration and Public Policies was held at MPF headquarters on 21 October. It was attended by Chief of the MPF Police Maj-Gen Zaw Win, the EU Ambassador to Myanmar and representatives of FILAPP.⁹

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TENSIONS RISE AS UWSA REFUSES TO ABANDON MONGLA POSTS

The Burmese government has asked United Wa State Army (UWSA) members to withdraw their troops, citing a push for greater stability in the Mongla region of eastern Shan State, according to a senior officer from the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), which controls the enclave on the Chinese border. Some 1,000 members of the UWSA took some key mountain posts from the NDAA earlier in October, reportedly a preventative measure against a potential offensive from the Burma Army; previously, the NDAA controlled all roadside posts in the area, which is designated Shan State Special Region 4. Now, some of these posts are blocked—locals recently reported not being able to pass from Mongla to the eastern Shan State administrative capital of Kengtung (Kyaington). Amid high tension in the region, Kyi Myint, a leader within the NDAA (more popularly known as the Mongla Group) said on 24 October that the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC)'s had asked the UWSA -by letter -to consider withdrawing their troops from the area and even requested a meeting with the group in Mongla to discuss the issue. The UWSA, however, refused the meeting, Kyi Myint said. "We have welcomed the NRPC to come for any amount of time to our Mongla area. But, the Wa told them in their letter not to come," said Kyi Myint. Leaders from the NDAA have also asked the UWSA to withdraw their troops from the area as there are worries that fighting could break out in the region with the Burma Army. Members of the UWSA said that they would only withdraw their troops after receiving orders to do so from their own senior officers, said the Kyi Myint. Rumors have spread locally that the Burma Army might launch an offensive in the Mongla region if UWSA members refuse to leave. "A lot of our people are scared. They should withdraw their troops to have stability in our region. Their action was a mistake. We do not want to have a military offensive, gunfire and artillery. We just wanted our people to have peace and be happy," said Kyi Myint.

The UWSA and NDAA are longtime allies; both groups sprang out of units of the Communist Party of Burma when it imploded in 1989, and signed ceasefires with the Burmese government more than 25 years ago. Relations with the Burma Army have been peaceful ever since. A divide between the two groups became visible concerning the 21st Century Panglong peace conference hosted in Napyidaw in late August and early September. The NDAA agreed to continue to engage in the peace process led by State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, but the UWSA delegation left the conference early, citing unequal treatment. "For us, we will keep supporting the peace process. This is our stand," said Kyi Myint of the NDAA. The UWSA commands 30,000 troops by some estimates, making it the largest non-state armed group in Burma. The group's territory borders that of the Burma Army in three eastern and southern Shan State locations: Tang Yan, Chin Shwe Hall, and Loi Tak. Large UWSA bases near these "borders" could contribute to the severity of fighting, were it to break out, explained ethnic affairs commentator Maung Soe. "It would be a lot better if they could avoid fighting breaking out," he said, about the Burmese government forces. "If they let it break out, it would quickly spread."¹⁰

⁹ EU injects funding into MPF training assistance –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-22-red.pdf> (GNLM) 22 October 2016 (p. 2)

¹⁰ Tensions Rise as UWSA Refuses to Abandon Mongla Posts –

<http://www.irrawaddy.com/news/tensions-rise-as-uwsa-refuses-to-abandon-mongla-posts.html> (the Irrawaddy) 24 October 2016

FOUR DAYS OF CLASHES REPORTED NEAR KYAUKME

The fourth day of renewed hostilities between the Tatmadaw and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) in northern Shan State continued on 17 October. The skirmish has so far been contained to a remote area near Par Hlaing village in Kyaukme township, but has not been close enough to civilian homes to displace anyone, per an MP and a TNLA spokesperson. "The fighting started on 14 October. I got information today that the fighting is still going on. A helicopter came and bombed the area," said Tar Pan Hla, a spokesperson for the TNLA. MP Sai Tun Aung for Kyaukme township, said that the recent outbreak of fighting has not lead to any IDPs. "Par Hlaing is a mountainous area, a little far away from the centre of Kyaukme. When I asked the villagers from that area on market day about the fighting, they said two troops exchanged fire, but not in the civilian area. They were also not sure what the cause of the fighting was," he said. Clashes between the TNLA and the Tatmadaw have also been reported at outposts in Mongngawt in Kyaukme township and in Khun Kha, Momeik/Mong Mit township over the past four days. "After the 21st-century Panglong Conference, the Tatmadaw began increasing their offensives into the ethnic areas, including in Kachin, Kayin and Shan states," said Tar Pan Hla. The TNLA was one of three groups not in attendance at the conference, as they refused to abide by a precondition to disarm. In August, in the lead-up to the conference, the Tatmadaw had demanded that the three groups making up the "northern alliance" hand over their weapons to a trusted third party before attending. The TNLA is not a signatory to the nationwide ceasefire agreement, and was sidelined from the previous government's peace negotiations.¹¹Ta'ang human rights groups, in the wake of the conference northern Shan State has seen a spate of human rights abuses along with the uptick in fighting. Kachin, Karen, Chin, Kayah and Shan youth groups, along with ethnic politicians and local CSOs, have demanded an immediate end to the hostilities. At the same time as it fights the Tatmadaw around Kyaukme, the TNLA is also involved in a clash with the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) near a gas pipeline connecting Manton and Namtu townships. Earlier this year, the TNLA accused the RCSS of teaming up with the Tatmadaw to wage large-scale offensives with thousands of troops deployed in the Kyaukme and Nawngcho areas of northwest Shan State. The Ta'ang National Party has tried, so far without success, to broker a peace deal between the RCSS and the TNLA in Shan State.

KAREN AND MON ARMED GROUPS LEADERS AGREE ON MEASURES TO TRY TO PREVENT FUTURE CONFLICTS

Leaders from the Karen National Union (KNU) and the New Mon State Party (NMSP) agreed more effort is needed to prevent territorial disputes between the two groups. Both parties met on 15 October, at an undisclosed location on the Thai-Burma border to discuss their concerns about territory. The latest disputes resulted in armed conflict between the two ethnic armed groups in early September this year. At the meeting, leaders from both parties agreed to stop put an end to the armed disputes from happening in the future. The Joint General Secretary of the KNU Padoh Saw Thaw Thi Bwe and leader of the Karen delegation said, "We didn't dwell on the problem, but tried to find solution. Both sides must control their organizations to stop the problems from happening. We all agreed to do everything we can to make it work." At the meeting, 14 members from the KNU led by Padoh Saw Thaw Thi Bwe and 12 members of the NMSP led by Vice Chairman of the NMSP Naing Han Tha attended the discussions to settle their territorial disputes and to put in place a joint committee in both Mon and Karen community areas. The on-going territorial dispute between the Karen and Mon has at times flared into armed tension between the two groups. Naing Han Tha said that the problems between the two groups have never been completely solved and that the Mon and Karen issue would only be completely solved when the country's political situation is stable. "I think that territorial

¹¹ Four days of clashes reported near Kyaukme – <http://www.mmmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/23149-four-days-of-clashes-reported-near-kyaukme.html>
(Myanmar Times) 18 October 2016

dispute should be settled by negotiating when it is peaceful [in the country].” Both delegations reached an agreement that there would not be any more armed conflict between the KNU and NMSP. Both groups agreed to the reappointment of a joint administrative committee and a demarcation committee, that was formed in 2006 and 2007 in 24 villages in the Taung Pauk areas. The last territorial disputes that resulted in armed clash between the two armed groups was in 8 September, near Thaegyau village in Kalainaung sub-township of Yephyu Township, in Burma’s southern Tanintharyi Region.¹²

KNU AND DKBA TO TALK REUNION

In response to a statement earlier this month from the Karen National Union (KNU) imploring an offshoot of the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA) to rejoin the KNU ranks, leaders of the two groups plan to meet. “The date isn’t confirmed yet but the meeting will be held in Hpa-an, Kayin State, for officially [discussing the proposal],” said Ko Kyaw, a peace negotiator for the Karen splinter faction. On 4 October, the KNU reached out to his group, which had clashed several times with a joint contingent of Tatmadaw and Border Guard Force soldiers the month prior. KNU leaders at the time, and again this week, said they hoped that bringing the splinter faction under the KNU banner would improve prospects for peace in the region. KNU Joint Secretary No 2 Pado Mahn Mahn confirmed the planned meeting, saying, “The call to reunify is for peace in Kayin State by [bringing the splinter group into] the KNU fold.” The KNU, earlier this month came with a condition: that the splinter group – with a strength of about 100 men – disavow a statement it made on January 16. That statement effectively announced the faction’s formation as an independent actor among Myanmar’s myriad ethnic armed groups. The faction has taken to calling itself the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army. Ko Kyaw Kyaw said no decision on reuniting would be made until after the Hpa-a meeting. “Some negotiation will take place at the meeting,” he said. In addition to being motivated by a desire to improve peace prospects, the KNU has said its invitation is in keeping with the goal of a committee formed in 2013 to unite the various Karen armed factions under one banner. Karen youth leader Saw Tun Tun said, “We want Karen armed groups united. We want Karen political parties united. Unity is the only way to move quickly toward our aim to build the federal democratic Union that all Karen people desire. We welcome the meeting.” Kayin State has seen relative calm this month compared with September’s clashes in Hlaingbwe Township, but Ko Kyaw said the DKBA splinter faction had clashed with BGF troops at Myaing Gyi Ngu and Kaung Mu Nar villages earlier this week. He said it was not a major altercation. The fighting last month led thousands of civilians to flee their homes. Saw Thar Boe of Karen Rivers Watch offered his support for the KNU proposal but said peace would require more than just the joining of Karen factions. “¹³If mega-projects are being implemented in the ethnic areas, there will be offensives by the military and the BGF, which is supported by the military,” he said.

WOMEN’S GROUPS DEMAND GENDER QUOTA IN FUTURE PEACE TALKS

In a two-day peace meeting organised by the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process (AGIPP) held in Mawlamyine from 21 to 22 October, women’s organisations agreed that civilians must collaboratively demand a halt to recent offensives as well as more gender-inclusive peace negotiations. The meeting was attended by 94 attendees from 49 women’s organisations across from Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Shan and Rakhine states. “What is needed most is peace in the region and an end to war,” said AGIPP spokesperson Mi Khon Chan Nom. The groups agreed that the best tactic for

¹² Karen and Mon Armed Groups Leaders Agree on Measures to Try to Prevent Future Conflicts – <http://karennews.org/2016/10/karen-and-mon-armed-groups-leaders-agree-on-measures-to-try-to-prevent-future-conflicts.html/> (Karen News) 21 October 2016/

NMSP and KNU troops exchange gunfire – <http://monnews.org/2016/10/26/nmsp-and-knu-troops-exchange-gunfire/> (IMNA) 26 October 2016

¹³ KNU, Karen splinter group to talk reunion – <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/23325-knu-karen-splinter-group-to-talk-reunion.html> (Myanmar Times) 27 October 2016

achieving this goal is to promote the voices of locals when making demands of or having discussions with the military, government or ethnic armed groups. In pushing for 30 percent participation in all peace talks, the groups cited the nationwide ceasefire agreement, which says, “We shall include a reasonable number of women representatives in the political dialogue process.” The 21st-century Panglong Conference, held in late August, did not honour the 30pc quota. Following the conference, there is a renewed call for more balanced gender representation in upcoming peace talks. “When we asked about the 30pc quota, we heard back there is a lack of qualified women participants,” said AGIPP spokesperson Nang Aye Thandar. “Now we are making a list of qualified women by creating a biography for the women’s organisations from every sector.” Women’s groups also called for a decrease in military spending to promote social services and healthcare. There should be an effort to foster social cohesion, group members said, not just a simple focus on ending the war, representatives said. “We have to do what we need to do with the confidence that doing something is better than doing nothing,” Nang Aye Thandar said.¹⁴

ARAKAN LOCALS CALL FOR ‘PEOPLE’S MILITIA’

Local ethnic Arakanese worried about their safety following militant attacks on security posts in Maungdaw Township have asked government officials to arm them with weapons to form a militia. The request was revealed at a government press conference on the situation in northern Arakan State that took place in Naypyidaw on 17 October. Deputy Defense Minister Maj-Gen Myint Nwe, however, said that the idea was not possible because the government is working towards peace in the area. “The ‘people’s militia’ strategy would be a long-term plan that needs serious consideration,” he added. “If rural villagers want to protect their villages as a people’s militia, they should join the regional police under the Myanmar Police Force,” said Maj-Gen Myint Nwe. Ministers and Deputy Ministers from the ministries of Information, of Defense, of Home Affairs, and of Labor, Immigration and Population were at the press conference.¹⁵

UNA ADDS MEMBERS, CALLS FOR END TO TATMADAW OFFENSIVES IN ETHNIC AREAS

The United Nationalities Alliance (UNA) demanded an end to military offensives in Kachin, Shan and Kayin states’ ethnic areas at a summit held on 15 October. Unrest in Rakhine State, the alliance said, is different in that it is a Union government issue. “If they continue their offensives against the ethnic areas, peace will never be achieved,” said UNA Secretary and Mon National Party Central Executive Committee member Nai Soe Myint. In the past two months, the Tatmadaw has launched attacks in Kachin, Shan and Kayin States, leaving thousands displaced or homeless. Earlier this month, the military attacked the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) and the Shan State Army, which signed the nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA), alliance members said. The RCSS accused the military of not honouring their end of the NCA. “The military has used heavy weapons, like [high-caliber infantry guns] and [fighter jets],” Nai Soe Myint said. “The government has yet to speak about the conflict going on in the ethnic areas and it has been two months. Lots of civilians are suffering. It is not like a normal offensive. This time, the conflict in the ethnic areas is like a large civil war.” The Chin League for Democracy, the Chin Progressive Party, the Shan Ni and the Northern Shan Ethnic Solidarity Party, all of which asked to be members in late 2015, were accepted into the UNA as members. The UNA, now made up of 15 parties, started as just 4 groups, representing Shan, Mon, Rakhine and Zomi people.

“On one side they [the Tatmadaw] are talking about peace and on the other side they are talking about fighting,” said the newly welcomed Chin Progressive Party’s general secretary Pu Shing Tun. “Armed ethnic groups are not coming from other countries. They live in their own areas. If the Tatmadaw

¹⁴ Women’s groups demand gender quota in future peace talks – <http://www.mmmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/23255-women-s-groups-demand-gender-quota-in-future-peace-talks.html> (Myanmar Times) 24 October 2016

¹⁵ Arakan Locals Call for ‘People’s Militia’ – <http://www.irrawaddy.com/news/arakan-locals-call-for-peoples-militia.html> (the Irrawaddy) 18 October 2016

attacks the ethnic armed groups' areas, they will be on the defensive. The first thing for the government to do is declare its intentions of upholding a unilateral ceasefire."

In Rakhine State, where recent violence left nine officers at three border stations dead and prompted a military backlash on Rohingya communities, the UNA urged the government to quell the unrest, noting that they stand with the Rakhine people. "Conflict in Rakhine and other ethnic areas takes a different form," the alliance announced. "The government should solve this Rakhine conflict."¹⁶

ELECTION TRIBUNAL DISMISSES EX-MINISTER'S FRAUD ALLEGATIONS

A Union Election Commission (UEC) dispute tribunal has dismissed the objection filed by former minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development Ohn Myint against the electoral victory of the National League for Democracy (NLD) lawmaker Aye Mya Myo. Former military general Ohn Myint ran as a Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) candidate in the November 2015 general election for a Lower House seat in Rangoon's Kyauktan Township who was defeated by Aye Mya Myo by more than 10,500 votes. In December, he filed a complaint with the UEC against Aye Mya Myo, alleging electoral fraud and accusing her of blocking him from campaigning. He asked the tribunal to declare him the rightful lawmaker of Kyauktan, claiming that he had obtained most votes. In an announcement published on 19 October, the election commission said that the tribunal - which is made up of senior UEC members—had decided to dismiss the objection, and ordered the petitioner Ohn Myint to pay 200,000 kyats (US\$157) compensation to his opponent, Aye Mya Myo. Ohn Myint will be allowed to appeal the tribunal's decision if he chooses. Aye Mya Myo said that the commission had cleared the objection as there was no reliable evidence for the accusation. "He accused me of blocking his way during the campaign. But I was acting in accordance with the commission's approval, for which we seek permission in advance. So, the commission decided that his accusation is not valid," she said.

Local news media previously reported that more than 40 tribunal cases have been filed with the UEC against winning candidates in November's election: 26 by USDP, and eight by the NLD. At the Union level, the cases involved 14 Lower House seats and seven Upper House seats; 25 regional parliamentary seats have also been disputed. Objections range from allegations of intimidation to misconduct at polling stations to defamation and misuse of religion. Aye Mya Myo said that Myo Chit, Ohn Myint's election agent, also sued both her and polling booth officials for electoral fraud. She was charged under Article 341 of Burma's Penal Code, which states that the "wrongful restraining" of any person shall be punished with one month in prison or with a fine. The case is still ongoing at the Kyauktan Township Court.¹⁷

ANALYSIS

State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi's visits to Japan is yet another indication of the NLD government's foreign policy in reaching out to seek the international community's support in aiding the democratisation process in Myanmar. Similarly, the visit to China by Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing can be seen more as promoting and further consolidation of *the Special Phaukphaw* friendship between the two countries and that the maintaining and promoting of peace and stability of the border regions is a must if Myanmar's on-going peace process is to succeed.

The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) recently celebrated its one year anniversary though the continued fighting between the KNU and DKBA, the hostilities between the Tatmadaw and the Ta'ang

¹⁶ UNA adds members, calls for end to Tatmadaw offensives in ethnic areas – <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/23120-una-adds-members-calls-for-end-to-tatmadaw-offensives-in-ethnic-areas.html> (Myanmar Times) 17 October 2016

¹⁷ Election Tribunal Dismisses Ex-Minister's Fraud Allegations – <http://www.irrawaddy.com/news/election-tribunal-dismisses-ex-ministers-fraud-allegations.html> (the Irrawaddy) 19 October 2016

National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the tension between the Wa and the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) does not bode well for Myanmar peace process. The NLD government on its part has been taken initiatives including the convening of the 21st Century Union Panglong Peace Conference, UPDJC meetings and holding conferences and talks with the key stakeholders involved. While diplomacy and negotiations have yet to bear fruit, the continued fighting will not serve to bridge the differences nor help in building trust. The government is now in a predicament of dealing with the Tatmadaw on one hand and the Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) on the other. It is not only a difficult a balancing act but also one which is making little headway. Frequent meetings between the government and Tatmadaw have been positive though the reality of day to day running and handling of issues related to the peace process is proving to be contrary. And until such a time when both the government and Tatmadaw share the same position the national reconciliation process in Myanmar will remain elusive and difficult.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: ADDRESS BY STATE COUNSELLOR AUNG SAN SUU KYI AT THE UPDJC MEETING.

It is necessary to exchange views and to engage in discussions with one another in peace building efforts, she pointed out. Solutions can be reached only in this way. Then, agreements reached will be implemented step by step, she added. Aung San Suu Kyi said that national level dialogues are intended for all stakeholders, as there are many ethnic groups in Myanmar. Defining that inclusiveness means participation of those who can represent all. She added that it can be assumed that the time has ripened for national level dialogues, and as it is impossible to hold all dialogues in the entire country simultaneously, three types of national level dialogues based on region, national cause and ethnic affairs will be held first before future are developed. She called on all parties to nurture friendship, intimacy and mutual understanding and said that each party is responsible for the inclusiveness of the peace process. The restoration of peace is the duty not only of people who are attending the meeting, but also of organisations, individuals and stakeholders that are endeavoring for peace and urged all to find the ways and means to enable non-signatories to the NCA to shoulder their responsibilities. In addition, she clarified that the only way to peace is to end conflicts. Thus, priority should be given to ending conflicts before urging the stakeholders that are outside the process not to delay. As the saying goes, "Time and tide wait for no man," and it is necessary to use time beneficially, she said. Aung San Suu Kyi said that the 2nd Panglong conference is expected to be held in February, and expressed hope that all parties would sign the NCA and participate in the process. In conclusion, she said that friends and experts believe that development of Myanmar is synonymous with the world being ready to lend a helping hand to the peace process of the NRPC. She also urged all to cooperate.¹⁸

Appendix B: ADDRESS BY KNU SECRETARY-GENERAL PADO SAW KWE HTOO WIN AT THE UPDJC MEETING

The UPDJC Vice Chairman for Ethnic Armed Groups Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win in his address said that armed conflicts that started with the independence of the country are not beneficial for the nation and have led to enormous losses for the state and ethnic peoples. Therefore, it is necessary for the people to cooperate in the process as much as they can by shouldering whatever duty they can perform, he added, before urging peace building leaders to end war bravely. Vice Chairman Dr Tin Myo Win said the meeting adopted 9 decisions and 8 motions were put on record. Most of the decisions were required for the national-level political dialogues and the second Panglong Conference. Members of the UPDJC for political parties also pointed out the lessons from peace efforts of successive governments. UPDJC Secretariat explained the work related to political framework review while the process of political dialogues, guides for national level dialogues and work procedures for regions, states and Nay Pyi Taw Council area, policies for formation of the UPDJC Office, topics for national—level dialogues and tasks related to political dialogues.¹⁹

Appendix C: FULL TEXT OF STATEMENT BY STATE COUNSELLOR AUNG SAN SUU KYI AT THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONWIDE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT CEREMONY.

I believe progress has been made over the past year. I would like to appreciate and honour the previous government led by former president U Thein Sein for their (important) contribution to

¹⁸ Exchange Views and End Conflicts: State Counsellor addresses UPDJC meeting – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-29-red.pdf> (GNLM) 29 October 2016 (p. 1 &3)

¹⁹ Exchange Views and End Conflicts: State Counsellor addresses UPDJC meeting – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-29-red.pdf> (GNLM) 29 October 2016 (p. 1 &3)

the signing of this NCA. As known to all, the first step is the most important step when treading on a path. And this step has already been taken to move forward. We are all aware that those who we would like to participate and those who are worth participating are not yet included. All-inclusiveness is very important to our country. Peace is a treasure which cannot be exchanged for whatsoever thing. Reflecting in the wording NCA, the notion of fire struck my mind. Should we want peace and ceasefire, we had better start with extinguishing of anger and prejudice which are likened to fire burning inside our heart and soul. So, only when all the individuals and organizations involved can subdue their fire-like anger and prejudice, will we be able to achieve the genuine peace. And only when these fires like mindsets can be calmed down within our organizations, will the worries of the (entire) people can be relieved to naught. So, ceasefire should be meant for extinguishing the fiery concerns of our people. All organizations are wanted to reflect on this very notion of the two semantic components of cease and fire. We have our own opinion, we can't deny. But I'm confident we are all able to overcome these bitter experiences. What we ought to compete is who the most forgiving individuals and / or organizations are. We are not to compete in our firing power. We need to vie with one another for our fire-extinguishing power. The whole country is watching us with great expectation. There is a world famous saying: Many can be deceived for a while, some, forever but all cannot be done so forever. People will know in the long run. What appeals to me more is an advice by a senior monk from Inle region in around 1988.

He gave me two case studies of U Poe Sein, a great theatrical artiste of his days, and Sein Bayda, the leader of a famous Myanmar orchestra. The former is noted for his skills in negotiation of steps whereas the latter is a world-famous performer. Our reverend monk said that although Poe Sein, the great, is highly skilful in negotiation of steps, the audience know when he misses one movement in performance. Similarly, although the audience cannot perform as good as Sein Bayda, they know when he misses a beat. The message he would like to give to me is to never think lowly of my supporters, followers and fans. So, I'd like to advise you all not to underestimate the reasoning power of our people. So, I want you all to take steps forward with the popular support. In this regard, we need to be courageous enough to tread on the path of change. Naturally, we are more convenient with our daily routine activities. But to start something new, we need courage, (correct) thinking, qualification. I believe we are all possessed with this ability. It is sorrowful to learn that there are still some organizations who have not signed NCA yet. What I'd like to say is who harbours greater magnanimity-the government, the Tatmadaw or the indigenous organizations? Who are more forgiving? Who are living in the present, forgetting the past? Instead of competing with one another in firing power, we'd better vie in fire-fighting power. Concerning the democratic federal union, I've repeatedly explained what democracy means. But I don't think it is still not enough. So, I'd like to reiterate that democracy has both rights and responsibilities. The rule by people is a system of governance under which everyone is responsible. So, I'd like all those involved in this peace process to bring the responsibilities to the fore, leaving the rights behind. Let bygones be bygones. Nothing is permanent, it is said. So, we'd better ponder over what kind of heritage we'll leave to the country when we leave (this earth). I'd like you all to leave legacy that will have a historical value. It's public idea and public view. I don't say our people are always right. They may stay on a wrong path for some period of time. But they will not always be in wrong direction. If there are things they don't understand, it is our duty to clarify things. If people understand (the situation) well enough, they are believed to support the peace process in a correct manner. May I conclude by saying that I understand you brethren might have harboured some bitter feelings. I request you not to look back at the past, just draw lessons from it. Just think of our future generations in a way they will not suffer the woes and sorrows we have felt in our past. Leave the best heritage to your nation i.e. peace. To achieve it, put out the fire burning in your heart and soul. This is my request. I thank you.²⁰

²⁰ Let Bygones Be Bygones –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-16-red.pdf> (GNLM) 16 October 2016 (p. 1 &3)

Appendix D: FULL STATEMENT OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF DEFENCE SERVICES SENIOR GENERAL MIN AUNG HLAING AT THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE NCA

Today the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement—NCA reached its first anniversary. The NCA was signed by the Government of the Republic of Union of Myanmar and armed ethnic groups with the aim of restoring a durable eternal peace through all-inclusive political dialogues. I feel honoured to have the opportunity to extend greetings on this auspicious occasion. At the same time, I wish all the participants and the entire national brethren peace and tranquillity. Our country faced bitter experiences of the colonial administrative machinery, and when we regained independence the country was in chaos alongside the internal disagreements which indeed was the evil legacy of colonialism. Of the peace processes carried out all along the successive periods since the regaining of independence, the NCA, which marks the first anniversary ceremony at present, in fact is the first ever accord signed by a greater number of multiple organizations and forces and international representatives. I would like to thank the organizations to carefully abide by and implement the NCA which was hardly signed. It is visible that the process of the NCA has successfully accomplished without any difficulties due to solving the misunderstanding cases at the basic level. I would like to suggest we need to carry on the tasks to have better situation. The most basic and the principle requirement for the durability and success of people-aspired multiparty democracy we are exercising at present is peace and stability. The previous Tatmadaw government in laying sound foundations for multiparty democracy also prioritized the work of ending armed conflicts. Motivated by the conviction that the internal peace process was indivisible with and parallel to the reforms, the government elected for the first term of the multiparty democracy administration in 2011 endeavoured with might and main to terminate ethnic armed conflicts. A new chapter was opened on 18 August 2011 by inviting all the armed ethnic groups to the peace talks. It took more than four years to reach the NCA signed on 15 October 2015 from the said date. With the genuine desire for peace and with much patience and tolerance, negotiations were made again and again till mutual understanding and trust could be built and accords reached between individuals and between groups. All ethnic armed groups included in the NCA process have agreed to the fact that the 70-year-long internal armed conflict is a political issue which must be solved through political dialogues. As a first step of the peace-making process, the Tatmadaw made respective state-level ceasefire agreements with ethnic armed groups. Secondly, the union-level ceasefire agreements were made. In short, the step-by step peace-making process was implemented. On 8 March, 2014, the Union Peace-making Work Committee and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team held a first-ever coordination meeting. On 8 April, 2014, the NCA Single Text was drafted by compiling the discussions from both sides. The draft NCA was written on 31 March, 2015 and finalized on 7 August, 2015. What I am saying aims to remember how we did not make strenuous efforts for the peace process hastily and overcame difficulties we faced through united and collaborative efforts and to be strength for the future peace-making processes. The NCA was drafted through a series of discussions between the Union Peace-making Work Committee and representatives from ethnic armed groups. The NCA was drafted only after all participants reached a detailed agreement on each chapter, section, paragraph and wording. Under various circumstances, some organizations included in the NCA drafting process were not ready to sign the NCA. Primarily some groups signed the NCA. So, we are trying for the participation of all the non-signatories. The door is still opened and they are always welcomed. As the foundation of the peace process was laid on the facts negotiated and agreed by them, their aspiration can be reflected through their participation in the process. The agreements contained in the NCA are broader than the term “ceasefire”. It can obviously be seen that the chapter 1 and chapter 5 of the NCA describe “Our Three Main National Causes”, which are the country’s national needs and interests, twice. Our country is a

Union which has been formed since yore. Any regions and states in the Union are home to all ethnics, not for a single ethnic specifically. For example, more than 1.6 million of population are living in Kachin State with 29.2 percent of Bamar, 23.6 percent of Shan, 18.97 percent of Jaingphaw, 7 percent of Lisu, 5.5 percent of Rawam, 3.33 percent of Lawwaw, 2.89 percent of Lacheik, 1.57 percent of Zaikwa, and 8 percent of other ethnics in population ratios in line with the census enumerated in 2014. Kayah State has a population of over 260,000 in which Kayah accounts for 59.45 percent, Shan 16.05 percent, Bamar 15.44 percent, Kayin 7.04 percent, other ethnics 2.02 percent. More than 5.8 million of population are scattering in Shan State with 35.23 percent of Shan, 11.44 percent of Bamar, 8.94 percent of Pa-O, 7.06 percent of Palaung, 6.41 percent of "Wa", 4.46 per cent of Danu, 3.22 percent of Kokang, 4.05 percent of Lahu, 2.35 percent of Jaingphaw and 16.84 percent of other ethnics. There are eight major tribes but over 130 ethnics are living in our country. Some ethnics have larger number of population but some are lesser number of population. Although there are differences in the size of states, population and demographic patterns, all the ethnic peoples are enjoying equal rights and anyone is not favoured. Democracy is a system in which the majority wish is observed under the law and the minority wish respected. So, equal rights of power are shared to respective regions and states under the Schedule Two of the Region or State Hluttaw Legislative List prescribed in Section 188 of the State Constitution (2008) as well as Schedule Three for Self-Administered Zones. All these are based on federal system. To be able to fully enjoy rights of power and opportunities, ethnics must carry out legislative processes through different levels of Hluttaw. It means democracy practice. I would like to say the attempts to grasp the opportunities through armed struggle line by turning a blind eye to the actual rights and opportunities is opposition to the people's desire. The principle duty of the Tatmadaw is to defend the State. Defending the State is to take security measures for the country and to protect the people, life and property of the people and the people's desire which is in line with the law. So, I would like to reveal the Tatmadaw will surely prevent all attempts opposing the people's desire and exerting pressures of the people under various reasons by standing on the public issue. Peace process will be stable and secure only when it is implemented systematically step by step. Politics is the Art of Possible, but not about wishes. In implementing the peace process, only when we focus on possible and pragmatic things rather our wishes, will we be able to achieve permanent peace which we eye for in certain period. Peace and stability is precondition for establishment of a genuine democracy. For our country to obtain peace and stability, ethnic armed conflicts must be ended. It needs to carry out the processes to bring ethnic armed conflicts to an end in line with the international procedures. The NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement) is the initial step of processes. The meetings and negotiations without the ceasefire would be for sure filled with mistrust, doubts, and the tendency to take up arms again in the face of some small difficulties. As we built trust in making peace process based on honesty of ethnics, it is important for further cementing the process and maintaining the pledge. Therefore, if we accept democracy, we need to abandon the obsession to the armed struggle line which is the opposition of democracy. For this to happen, we have the NCA which has been agreed by many forces. The NCA clearly states ceasefire process and future. Therefore, the Tatmadaw has adopted and upholds six-point peace policy in its strenuous efforts for building true, permanent peace. The six-point peace policy is the 'awareness' of the Tatmadaw from its historic experiences of peace struggle in successive periods while it is also the 'reality' to strengthen the peace building process. The six-point peace policy of Tatmadaw and the NCA pave way to peace from armed path and from peace to a genuine democratic Union based on the federal system as well. It is also the answer to serve the interest of the people and Union without presenting any trouble to any force. Therefore, the Tatmadaw call for respecting six-point peace policy and urge the ethnic armed groups to sign the NCA. Signing the NCA will bring many benefits, already proven by such things as clashes have ended and peace has prevailed in the regions of signatories and local people can earn their livelihood safely while trust has grown between the forces of two sides. Therefore, I would like to urge the non-signatories to follow the good example. In marching toward multiparty democracy which people aspire, it is important that we take steps in line with democratic

practices. The solutions to demands of respective organizations must be found through dialogue and negotiation. And the door has been kept open for this. Turning a blind eye to those open doors and making demands out of a gun barrel is just the reverse of democracy. These demands cause damage to the peace process and push the country into vicious circle. So, I would like to note that relevant organizations need to carefully assess these demands. The government elected by the people in 2015 has been giving priority to implementing internal peace building process on a wider scale. On 31 August, this year, Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong was held and wishes of respective forces could be discussed, making the process transparent to the people across the country. The strength of the nation lies within. And it could also present the fundamental principle that peace process would be continued based on the NCA. However, if it takes a long time for implementing the peace processes, people will face loss of life and property as well as the State will be lagged development. As such, it needs to complete the Peace Conference through signing the NCA as quickly as possible by serving the interest of the State and the ethnics. In conclusion, the NCA is not the standpoint of the government or the Tatmadaw alone or of a particular ethnic armed group, but is the outcome of the negotiations between the government and ethnic armed groups about the State's demands. It should not try for heading towards the national level meetings beyond the NCA issues without signing the NCA. History will witness what we did, which policy we upheld and how peace was built. I would like to conclude here by calling for joining and continued implementation of the NCA to set an example to future generations as the persons who had built peaceful and strong Union. Thank you! ²¹

Appendix E: FULL STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE KNU, SAW MUTU SAE POE AT THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE NCA

The NCA is essential for the correct path to maintain all-round stability in Myanmar, which is important to regional stability geopolitically. We are proud and glad to be able to participate with EAOs to restore genuine peace and to find a political solution to the conflicts based on the NCA. It is necessary for all of us to envision a democratic federal union. The NCA and the peace process also serve as an important pillar for international support and lifting of sanctions we are now enjoying. Although the international community is supporting us, everything depends on the NCA, including how much effort we can exert to bring about positive development, how serious we are on national reconciliation and which tasks and mechanisms we will develop. It is necessary to avoid the use of force in our attempts to adopt and exercise the new political culture of the NCA and in finding political solutions through political means. I would like to call for all to develop precise reform policies to enable us to escape from the influence of the past experiences and lessons. For instance, it is necessary to stop the ongoing armed conflicts in northern Myanmar. Will the inclusive reform path be clear only when the public can take part in the genuine reform? Only then, can success be achieved. It is necessary for various levels of all signatories to the NCA to understand and accept the essence of the agreement such as equality, cooperation and negotiation and to implement the agreement without derailing from the essences at any situation. Although incidents are understandable, intentional attacks are not acceptable. Leaders from both sides are responsible to reach an agreement on interpretation of the NCA. I would like to call for all to continue to negotiate with all seriousness some parts of the NCA that have yet to be implemented for various reasons. Though, Myanmar is enjoying the diplomatic support and international recognition for commencing political dialogues within the one year's period of the NCA and holding the Union Peace Conference — 21st Century Panglong, it should also be remembered that there are still weaknesses in implementing the NCA. Although efforts are being made to hold political dialogues to rebuild the nation in accordance with

²¹ Greetings of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the first anniversary of the NCA – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-16-red.pdf> (GNLM) 16 October 2016 (p. 5)

the provision of the NCA, I would like to call for continued strengthening of dialogue space among NCA signatories. Although joint committees are dialogue spaces for leaders of both sides, I would like to point out that it is important to hold meaningful political discussions. Although dialogues spaces exist to some extent at the union level, there are weaknesses to create dialogue spaces for region and state levels. Therefore, it is necessary to move from what seems to be elite peace process to inclusive peace process. National reconciliation is of utmost importance for the success of the peace process. Therefore, on behalf of NCA signatories, I would like to call for the government and the Tatmadaw with all seriousness to ease policies and suspend the use of force to pave way for non-signatories to sign the NCA.

It is also necessary for both sides to negotiate and make bargains in political dialogues to build enduring peace desired by the people through the process of respect, recognition and joint implementation of the NCA among the government, the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate at the first anniversary of the NCA to pursue the political solution through political means without resorting to the use of force and call on all to build together a new, stable, harmonious and peaceful democratic federal union that will enable Myanmar to enjoy its previous prestige not only in Asia but also in the world.²²

²² Saw Mutu Sae Poe, Chairman of KNU, extends greetings at the first anniversary of signing NCA – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs23/GNLM2016-10-16-red.pdf> (GNLM) 16 October 2016 (p. 2)