

Appeal of UNFC to the People and International Community

At the oath taking ceremony for assuming presidential duties, President U Thein Sein said that he would endeavor for national unity and the growth of the union spirit, which was true nationalism. On August 18, the government made overture for peace talk with the Union Government Statement Number 1/2011. These moves are indications of willingness to build national unity by the new government, led by U Thein Sein.

Members of our United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), the armed organizations of the ethnic nationalities, also desire national unity. Even though the two sides have the desire for national unity, why the national unity is in shambles and armed conflict has been continuing for more than 60 years? We need to analyze the question.

We, members of the UNFC, are not struggling for breaking away from the union. We are simply striving to regain our birth rights, which are the rights of the ethnic nationalities. Our movement had been a peaceful one, but as force was used in response to our peaceful movement, we had inevitably to take up arms. If this fact is realized and recognized, it would be easy to resolve the problem. In the land area called the Union of Burma, the ethnic nationalities had lived evidently in their own separate lands with their own administration, throughout the ages, in history. They struggled collectively for liberation from serfdom under the British colonialists. The independent Union was established through negotiated agreement.

In spite of these facts, the successive governments in power, after independence, give special privileges to the ethnic Burmans, subordinate the other ethnic nationalities to domination of the ethnic Burmans and seize the natural resources in the non-Burman nationalities' lands, in addition to suppressing their languages, literatures and cultures, by various means. Because of these injustices, the national unity is in ruin.

We believe that true and durable national unity can be built only on the establishment of ethnic equality and a genuine union. In realizing national unity, it is necessary for all stakeholders to engage in political dialogue for sound understanding and agreement. With these objectives in view, our ethnic leaders had endeavored in 1961/1962. However, the military seized power using the movement as an excuse.

From 1963 to 2010, the ethnic organizations had met with the governments in power on several occasions. However, the military governments in power had endeavored only for disarming and dissolution of the ethnic armies without any dialogue for political settlement. In this way, the civil war has dragged on without end. Because of the long war, the country has lagged behind in development and the people have to face extreme difficulty.

It is necessary to analyze whether President U Thein Sein government makes an overture to the armed ethnic nationality forces for peace talk, after learning a lesson from the experiences or out of other intentions. While making a political move of the overture for peace talk, the new government has launched massive, military offensives, since a few months back, against our UNFC members the SSPP/SSA, which represents the Shan people and the KIO/KIA, which represents the Kachin people.

Because of the offensives, battles are raging up to this day and the local populations have become war refugees and part of collateral damages of the war. Accordingly, the call for dialogue on the one hand and launching massive military offensives on the other, have caused serious doubt as to whether the overture for dialogue is out of good intentions. The government offensives are in support of the large-scale foreign investments and the killing of one another for them, among the people, has caused extreme distress for us. We must regard with grave cautiousness some forces, which keep saying callously that great changes are starting to take place in the time of this government.

For that reason, we would like to appeal to the peace and justice loving people and the international forces to use their influence for a speedy resolution, by political means, of the armed conflict between President U Thein Sein government and our armed ethnic nationality forces.

**11th Day of Thadingyut Waxing Moon, 1374
October 8, 2011**

**Central Executive Committee
United Nationalities Federal Council**