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UNITED NATIONALITIES FEDERAL COUNCIL (UNION OF BURMA)

United Nationalities Federal Council Statement on EU Review of Sanctions on Burma

3 / 2013

April 21, 2013

The United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) urges the European Union (EU) to maintain the current level of sanctions on Burma until the Government of Burma takes further steps to demonstrate its commitment to peace, political reform, and respect for human rights.

While the UNFC acknowledges the important changes that have taken place in Burma over the last two years, it is clear that the Burma's transition is only beginning. Sanctions are one of the most important of pressure on the Government of Burma to reform. If the EU chooses to remove all sanctions, it will reduce its ability to work to promote, peace, democracy, and human rights in Burma.

Despite initial ceasefire negotiations, the Government has failed to take meaningful steps to achieve peace. In Kachin State and Northern Shan State, fighting continues, and the Government has not yet signed a comprehensive ceasefire agreement. Acts of war such as strengthening frontline positions, building military roads etc. also continue in other ethnic nationalities' areas despite ceasefire agreements. Moreover, the Government has not entered into genuine political dialogue with ethnic leaders or the democratic forces led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Nor has it outlined a timetable for political talks, designed to amend the 2008 Constitution. Without meaningful political dialogue, a peaceful solution to Burma's ethnic conflicts will not be reached and fighting will continue. Further still, restrictive laws, such as Section 17-1 of the Unlawful Association Act, 1908, remain, limiting the ability of ethnic nationalities to work together to promote peace.

Until the Government of Burma has taken further steps to achieve political solutions to Burma's ethnic conflicts, EU sanctions serve a valuable function and should not be lifted. Sanctions represent an important signal to the Government of Burma that it must take active steps to secure peace before Burma can be fully accepted by the international community.

We, the UNFC, strongly urge the European Union not to lift further sanctions on Burma until the government and military in Burma demonstrate a stronger commitment to achieving peace, democracy, and respect for human rights.

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