



CANADIAN CAMPAIGN
FOR FREE BURMA



Kachin Canadian Association

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE CANADIAN CAMPAIGN FOR FREE BURMA AND THE KACHIN CANADIAN ASSOCIATION, REGARDING THE ONGOING ARMED CONFLICT IN KACHIN STATE, NORTHERN BURMA, AND PEACE TALKS

14 Feb 2013

Despite the process of reforms and democratization in central and lower part of Burma, The Burmese Army, in June of 2011, launched an ongoing offensive attack in Kachin State, northern Burma, breaking a 17-year long ceasefire agreement.

The Burmese Army has used a combined raid of air strikes, and indiscriminate shelling, using jet fighters, helicopter gunships and heavy artillery during the attacks, taking dozens of innocent lives and creating over 100,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who receive very little international humanitarian assistance. Obviously, there has been a humanitarian disaster taking place in the conflict zone, which has caused serious concerns among the international reporters and documenters of human rights abuses.

Ceasefire agreements have been reached with some ethnic groups, but the military offensives against the Kachins have escalated. The Burmese Army has been accused of grave human rights violations, including rape, torture, destruction of villages, looting, destruction of churches, and The killing of civilians. Several dozen Kachin civilians have been detained and tortured by the Burmese authorities for allegedly having “unlawful” contact with The Kachin Independence Army (KIA). One of the most serious concerns has been the Burmese Army and its troops’ systematic use of rape against the Kachin women, among other crimes and human rights violations.

On Jan 18th, 2013, President Thein Sein office issued a ceasefire order, for the third time since the Burmese army’s offensive attacks began 19-months ago. However, the Burmese Army completely ignored the order, and continued with their bombardment, deploying more troops around Laiza, a major township for Kachins. The Burma Army’s offensives continued across Kachin Land.

There was a new round of peace talks between the Burmese government and KIA/KIO brokered by the Chinese government in Ruili, A town in China on February 4, 2013 (local time). A joint statement was issued at the end of the meeting that said the meeting was witnessed by a Chinese Ambassador to Burma, The Karen National Union (KNU) Chairman and General Secretary, and 3 leaders from the Restoration Council of Shan State /Shan State Army. They agreed to establish communication channels, reducing military tension, preparing for next talks and the invitation of observers and organizations as witnesses in the next meeting.

We Welcome the news about upcoming meeting between the government peace negotiators and the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) including Kachin leaders in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on February 20, to dialogue with the ethnic groups. UNFC is an umbrella organization of Burma's 11 ethnic armed groups.

Recently, The UN has indicated that they are willing to help and participate in future peace talk as witness. Canada should extend a similar offer to help the peace process. We believe that Canadian officials should meet with the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), and United Nationalities Alliance (UNA) which is an umbrella alliance of registered ethnic political parties, in order to help in building a peaceful federal union.

The plight of the Kachin should not be left alone to the hands of the Burmese as it reveals the very fragile stability Burma has established despite its reform. It is time to bring basic human rights to life and safety to the ethnic peoples of Burma, and right now, to the innocent people in the northern Burma.

Note: More than 45% of the population in Burma is ethnic minority groups and 65% of land belongs to them. Democratic and economic reform will not materialize if the political process does not address the ethnic issues and their dream of a genuine federal union (which Aung San agreed in the Panlong agreement with the ethnic leaders in order to gain the independence from the British).

Canadian Campaign for Free Burma

Contact Person:

Paul Copeland; paulcope9@yahoo.com

Zaw Wai Kyaw; zaw.w.kyaw@gmail.com

Kachin Canadian Association

Contact Person:

Pri Lwan; info@kachincanada.org

Hkaung Stella Naw;

hkaung.naw@webmail.utoronto.ca

The Canadian Campaign for Free Burma (CC4FB) is a group of concerned Canadians from all walks of life and from across the political spectrum that, for reasons both personal and compassionate, have come together to support the democracy and human rights movement in Burma.

The Kachin Canadian Association (KCA) is a non-profit and nationwide organization, run by people of common interest to represent the concerns of Kachins' social and cultural issues in Burma and Canada.