
POLITICAL MONITOR NO. 38

OFFICIAL MEDIA

PRESIDENT ORDERS CEASEFIRE IN KACHIN STATE

In a statement published in the state-run media, Burma's National Human Rights Commission has welcomed the reports that President U Thein Sein had ordered the military to cease its offensive against the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and has also urged the KIA to reciprocate the government's peace offer in a similar manner. The statement acknowledges the role of the Kachin State Government in implementing humanitarian aid work in the affected regions and the strongly urges for the peace negotiations to result in the cessation of hostilities and an end to the conflict in order to bring about peace throughout the nation.¹ *For the full statement see the appendix.*

Unofficial Media

President Thein Sein gave written instructions to the commander-in-chief of the Defence Services to stop military offensives in Kachin State on 10 December. At a press conference, Kachin State Chief Minister La John Ngan Sai read the president's letter instructing General Min Aung Hlaing to halt offensives, ordering the commander not to launch military offensives "except for resisting [offensives] if required", and saying that leaders on both sides are working to establish peace in Kachin State and to clear up misunderstandings. However, the KIA said that it has not been officially informed about the instructions and that the government is still launching military offensives and fighting continues.²

GOVERNMENT AND DKBA (KLO HTOO BAW GROUP) SIGN PEACE AGREEMENT

A ceasefire agreement between the Union government and Kaloh Htoo Baw armed group (Democratic Karen Buddhist Army-DKBA) was signed in Hpa-an, the capital of Kayin State, on 11 December. The government delegation was led by U Aung Thaung, MP of the Pyithu Hluttaw and leader of the Union Level Peace Committee and while the Kaloh Htoo Baw group was headed by U Saw Lah Pwe. Under the agreement, the two sides agreed to the following six points:

1. It is agreed to approve initial peace agreement signed by Kayin State Peace Making Group and Klo Htoo Baw (former DKBA) on 3 November 2011.
2. Kayin State is an important part of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. It is agreed not to secede Kayin State from the Union.
3. It is agreed to uphold Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of National Solidarity and Perpetuation of Sovereignty forever.
4. It is agreed to cooperate with the government in regional development, settlement of members of Klo Htoo Baw group and their families and improvement of socio-economic status in Sukali region under existing laws, basing temporarily in Sone Hsi Myaing region.
5. It is agreed to cooperate with the Union government in the fight against narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
6. It is agreed to continue dialogue for establishing eternal peace.³

¹ Myanmar National Human Rights Commission issues statement - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-14.pdf> (NLM) 14 December 2011 (p. 9)

² Burma orders halt to military offensives in Kachin State - <http://mizzima.com/special/kachin-battle-report/6270-burma-orders-halt-to-military-offensives-in-kachin-state.html> (Mizzima) 12 December 2011

³ Six points agreed in Union level peace talk with Klo Htoo Baw (former DKBA) - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 December 2011 (p. 1)

EU FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY ADVISOR COOPER MEETS PRESIDENT

President U Thein Sein received Robert Cooper, Head of the Department for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Advisor to the European Union's Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton, at the Presidential House on 14 December. The President and Mr. Cooper had cordial and frank discussions on further strengthening friendship between Burma and the EU as well as fostering constructive relations. Other members of the EU delegation included EU Ambassador to Myanmar David Lipman, French Ambassador in Burma Thierry Mathou, and Seamus Gillespie of the European Union External Action Services (EEAS).⁴ In a separate meeting, the group also met Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa the Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw.⁵ Earlier this year in June, Mr. Cooper made his first official trip to Burma and met with the Vice-President Thiha Thura U Tin Aung Myint Oo and Foreign Affairs Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin⁶ as well as opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Unofficial Media

Robert Cooper also met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the NLD's Central Executive Committee members and the Committee Representing People's Parliament (CRPP) on 15 December at the NLD's headquarters. Discussions focussed on the positions and activities of the NLD party and its efforts in resolving ethnic nationalities issues as well as the release of political prisoners.⁷

SINGAPOREAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER MEETS BURMESE LEADERS

The Foreign Minister of Singapore K Shanmugam led a goodwill delegation to Burma from 12-14 December. During the visit he met President U Thein Sein, Upper House Speaker U Khin Aung Myint, and Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin in Nay Pyi Taw.⁸ Minister Shanmugam also travelled to Kawhmu, a cyclone-hit township in Yangon region, and handed over tube wells to a total of 25 villages built and funded by the Singaporean humanitarian aid pledge in partnership with a local non-government organization.⁹

⁴ President U Thein Sein meets Head of Department for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Advisor to Chief of European Union's Foreign Policy -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-15.pdf> (NLM) 15 December 2011 (p. 1)

Also present were Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister at the President Office U Soe Maung, Union Minister for Labour and for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Aung Kyi and other officials.

⁵ Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa meets Mr. Robert Cooper and Professor Bronislaw Misztal of Community of Democracies -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-15.pdf> (NLM) 15 December 2011 (p. 9)

⁶ Vice-President Thiha Thura U Tin Aung Myint Oo receives EU delegation -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs11/NLM2011-06-21.pdf> (NLM) 21 June 2011 (p. 2) /

Myanmar, European Union to boost cooperation and relations -

http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs11/NLM_2011-06-21.pdf (NLM) 21 June 2011 (p. 2)

⁷ NLD Central Executive Committee Met with EU Adviser -

<http://www.nldburma.org/international-affairs/europ/458-nld-central-executive-committee-met-with-eu-adviser.html> (NLD) 16 December 2011

Vice Chairman U Tin Oo, CEC members U Win Tin, U Than Tun, U Hla Pe, U Nyunt Wai, U Nyan Win, U Ohn Kyaing, U Han Thar Myint, U Win Myint, Dr. May Win Myint, CRPP (Committee Representing the People's Parliament) Secretary U Aye Thar Aung and members Nai Ngwe Thein, U Pu Cin Tian Htan, U Sai Saw Aung and U Soe Win also attended the meeting.

⁸ President U Thein Sein receives Singaporean Foreign Affairs Minister and party -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-14.pdf> (NLM) 14 December 2011 (p. 1) /

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint meets Singaporean Foreign Affairs Minister and party -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-14.pdf> (NLM) 14 December 2011 (p. 16) /

Myanmar, Singapore to fortify relations and cooperation -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-14.pdf> (NLM) 14 December 2011 (p. 2) /

Union Attorney-General receives Singaporean Foreign Affairs Minister -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-14.pdf> (NLM) 14 December 2011 (p. 9)

⁹ Tube-wells donated by Singapore to Kawhmu Township -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-13.pdf> (NLM) 13 December 2011 (p. 8)

Unofficial Media

Minister Shanmugam reaffirmed the warm and long-standing ties between Singapore and Burma, and President Thein Sein briefed him on recent developments in Burma, his development priorities, and expressed his government's appreciation for Singapore's technical assistance and post-Cyclone Nargis humanitarian assistance to Burma. Minister Shanmugam and Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin discussed ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation, including new areas where Singapore could share its developmental experience and both pledged also to work closely together within ASEAN and other multilateral fora. The Singaporean FM also met Union Attorney General Dr Tun Shin and Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) Secretary-General U Htay Oo, as well as Aung San Suu Kyi at her residence in Yangon¹⁰

LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER RECEIVES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES OF POLAND

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa received the Executive Director of the Community of Democracies of Poland Professor Bronislaw Misztal with Robert Cooper, Advisor to the EU's Foreign Policy Chief, at the Hluttaw Building on 15 December. They discussed the promotion of friendly relations as well as bilateral cooperation between the parliamentary assemblies of Burma and Poland.¹¹

Unofficial Media

The Chairman of the Academic Advisory Board of the Community of Democracies (CD) Professor Wojciech Sadurski also visited Burma in November 2011 and met NLD leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to discuss current political situation in Burma and possibilities of the CD's involvement in the transition of democracy in the country.¹²

LOWER HOUSE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION VISITS INDIA

A Burmese parliamentary delegation led by Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann visited India from 11-17 December at the invitation of the Speaker of the Council of State Mohammad Hamid Ansari and Speaker of House of Representatives Meira Kumar (Smt). During the visit the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker met Indian President Pratibha Devi Singh Patil, Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari and Indian Minister of External Affairs Shri SM Krishna. In the meetings Thura Shwe Mann said that Burma's democracy was still in its infancy and thus needed experiences and practical knowledge in democracy and parliamentary affairs from India. He added that the foundations to democratic practices were being implemented and Burma seeks India's assistance in enhancing the capacities of parliamentary personnel as well as strengthening the democratic system. The Lower House Speaker also met the Speaker of the Indian Lok Sabha Meira Kumar, opposition leaders Sushma Swaraj and Shri Arun Jaitle and Chairman of the Standing Committee on External Affairs HK Dua and discussed bilateral relations between the two countries and exchanged views on parliamentary affairs.¹³

¹⁰ Shanmugam reaffirms warm Singapore-Myanmar ties - http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/11712251_1/.html (Channel News Asia) 14 December 2011

¹¹ Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa meets Professor Bronislaw Misztal of Community of Democracies - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-15.pdf> (NLM) 15 December 2011 (p. 9)

¹² Professor Sadurski meets Aung San Suu Kyi - http://community-democracies.org/images/stories/Academic_Advisory_Board_CD_Professor_Sadurski_meets_Aung_San_Suu_Kyi.pdf (COD) 10 November 2011.

¹³ Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann and party leave for Republic of India - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-12.pdf> (NLM) 12 December 2011 (p. 16) /

BURMA'S NAVAL CHIEF VISITS BANGLADESH

With the aim of increasing military ties, Burma's naval chief Vice-Admiral Nyan Tun led an 8-member defense delegation on a goodwill visit to Bangladesh from 12 to 15 December at the invitation of Chief of the Naval Staff Vice Admiral Zahir Uddin Ahmed.¹⁴ With the aim of promoting better ties between the two military institutions, Bangladesh also sent a delegation led by Chief of Army Staff General Muhammad Abdul Mubeen, ndc to Burma in May 2011.¹⁵

Unofficial Media

During the visit the Vice-Admiral paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. They discussed matters of mutual interest and Nyan Tun stated that his country wanted to resolve land and maritime disputes through bilateral discussions. He also met the Chief of Staff of Bangladeshi Navy Z U Ahmed at the Naval headquarters in Dhaka and held separate meetings with other counterparts from the Bangladesh defense services. Navy Chief Nyan Tun is the third-highest military official to visit Bangladesh in a year since Burmese Deputy Chief Lt. General Soe Win visited in November and Chief Lt. General Myat Hein visited the country April this year.¹⁶

DEPUTY FM ATTENDS 5TH BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM IN INDONESIA

A Burmese delegation headed by Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister U Maung Myint attended the 4th Bali Democracy Forum held in Bali, Indonesia from 8 - 9 December 2011. The opening session was attended by the Indonesian President, and Heads of State, Prime Ministers and Ministers from 84 countries from the Asia region and representatives from 24 countries outside Asia. The leaders attending the forum delivered statements and also held a general debate under the theme of "Enhancing Democratic Participation in a Changing World: Responding to Democratic Voices" and an interactive sessions focused on "The ability of [the] State to respond to the voice of Democracy" and "Ensuring Democratic Space for civil society participation" respectively.¹⁷

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann visits India -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-19.pdf> (NLM) 19 December 2011 (p. 16 + 9)

The Lower House Speaker was accompanied by Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee Chairman U T Khun Myat (USDP), International Relations Committee Chairman U Hla Myint Oo (USDP), Planning and Finance Development Committee Chairman U Soe Tha (USDP), Economic and Trade Development Committee Chairman U Maung Maung Thein (USDP), Agriculture, Livestock Breeding and Fisheries Development Committee Chairman U Soe Naing (USDP), Investment and Industrial Development Committee Chairman U Htay Myint (USDP), Transport, Communication and Construction Committee Chairman U Thein Swe (USDP), Hluttaw Rights Committee Secretary Dr Soe Yin (USDP), Public Accounts Committee U Maung Toe Secretary (USDP), Public Affairs Management Committee Secretary U Tin Maung Oo (USDP), Peasant, Worker and Youth Affairs Committee Secretary U Htay Win (USDP), Public Accounts Committee member Dr. Win Myint (USDP), Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Vetting Undertakings Committee member U Win Than (USDP), Waterway Transport Development Committee member U Win Oo (USDP) and secretary of the delegation Deputy Director- General U Kyaw Soe of the Pyithu Hluttaw Office.

¹⁴ Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Nyan Tun, wife and party arrive in Dhaka -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-16.pdf> (NLM) 16 December 2011 (p. 9)

¹⁵ Defence Services C-in-C receives Chief of Army Staff of Bangladesh Army -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs11/NLM2011-05-25.pdf> (NLM) 25 May 2011 (p.7) /

Deputy Defence Services Commander-in-Chief welcomes Chief of Army Staff of Bangladesh Army -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs11/NLM2011-05-24.pdf> (NLM) 24 May 2011 (p. 8)

¹⁶ Burma Navy Chief Now in Bangladesh -

<http://www.narinjara.com/details.asp?id=3198> (Narinjara) 13 December 2011

¹⁷ Deputy FM attends 4th Bali Democracy Forum in Indonesia -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-14.pdf> (NLM) 14 December 2011 (p. 9)

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GOVERNMENT FORMS NEW NEGOTIATING TEAM

Political observers in Rangoon as well as various ethnic sources have reported that President Thein Sein has now formed a new "union-level peace discussion group" to be headed by Railways Minister ex-Maj-Gen Aung Min. Aung Min, a former military intelligence officer, assumed the role of Thein Sein's special representative when he met in recent weeks the various ethnic groups for bilateral talks at a variety of locations. The five ethnic armed groups were the SSA-South, the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the Karen National Union (KNU), the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), and the Chin National Front (CNF). According to the sources, the new union-level peace discussion group members include: Industrial Minister and former navy Chief Vice Admiral Soe Thein, Minister of Cooperation ex-Gen U Ohn Myint, Minister of Immigration ex-Brig-Gen U Khin Yi, Minister of Environment and Forestry U Win Tun, Minister of Electric Power-2 Khin Maung Soe, Minister of Energy Than Htay, Deputy Minister of Border Affairs Maj-Gen Zaw Win, Col Kyaw Soe Win of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Aung Min. However, it is not clear whether the newly formed government peacemaking group will replace the existing negotiating team led by U Aung Thaung, a member of the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party and former Minister for Industry-1.¹⁸

CHINESE AMBASSADOR MEETS AUNG SAN SUU KYI

In the highest level contact in two decades, the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Li Jinhua held a rare meeting with pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Weimin also said China's top diplomat State Councilor Dai Bingguo would travel shortly to Burma for a summit of Mekong River countries, weeks after U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's landmark visit. Liu said that Ambassador Li Junhua's meeting with Nobel Peace Prize laureate was in response to a request from her. "Madame Aung San Suu Kyi has proposed a number of times her desire for contact with the Chinese side, and the Chinese ambassador to Myanmar's meeting was in answer to this," he said, declining to say when or where the meeting took place. Liu said the ambassador "listened to Aung San Suu Kyi's ideas." China has exchanges with people in Burma "from all quarters who support friendship and cooperation between China and Myanmar, on the basis of mutual respect and non-interference in domestic affairs," he added. Suu Kyi has tried to reassure China, who strongly backed the military regime which locked her up, that she does not consider Beijing an enemy, making remarks to that effect almost immediately upon being released from house arrest last year. China's then-ambassador Cheng Ruisheng, who served in Burma from 1987 to 1991, met Suu Kyi twice and had previously been the most senior Chinese official to have contact with her, according to Chinese media. "China has always strived to develop a comprehensive strategic partnership with Myanmar and supports the Myanmar government's efforts to advance economic and social development and promote domestic reconciliation," Liu added.¹⁹

MON PARTY PREPARES FOR PEACE TALKS

New Mon State Party (NMSP) has planned to organize peace talks with representatives of the Burmese government according to NMSP General Secretary Nai Hong Sar. Railways Minister U Aung Min, who has been busy holding talks with ethnic armed groups, offered the NMSP to enter a peace

¹⁸ Thein Sein Forms New Negotiating Team -

http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=22654 (Irrawaddy) 14 December 2011

¹⁹ China says ambassador meets Myanmar's Suu Kyi -

<http://af.reuters.com/article/energyOilNews/idAFL3E7NF1ZV20111215?Page Number= 2&virtualBrandChannel=0>
(Reuters) 15 December 2011

dialogue. While the exact details of the peace offer remains unclear and the NMSP has urged the government to declare a nationwide ceasefire with all ethnic armed groups and develop a political dialogue with the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC). The NMSP has held peace dialogues twice before - first with representatives of Mon State government in October and the second with "Peace Agents" of Mon State government. The NMSP's 8th Central Conference is due to be held in December, and the ceasefire issue will be the main topic of discussion, according to military issues advisor of the NMSP, Colonel Kao Rot (retired). "It'll be good if they meet before the central conference. If the meeting occurs after the conference, the decision might be changed," he Colonel Kao Rot continued. The NMSP entered a ceasefire agreement with the Burmese government in 1995. In September of 2010, after the military government coerced the NMSP to transform into the Border Guard Force (BGF), the agreement was broken.²⁰

JAPANESE DEVELOPMENT AID TO RESUME?

Japan may resume funding development projects in Burma after an 8-year halt, in light of changes taking place in the country. Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Koichiro Gemba will arrive on a 3-day visit on 25 December to talk with high-level government officials and opposition group members, including Aung San Suu Kyi. In 2003, after the Depayin Massacre, Japan suspended development aid to Burma in response to the killings and the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi but it continued to provide humanitarian aid. Gemba's visit will be the first by a top Japanese official since former Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi visited in 2002. FM Gemba, who is also a Democratic Party Lower House MP, was appointed Foreign Minister in September 2011. During the visit the FM is likely to meet President Thein Sein, Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin and ethnic leaders. Gemba said that during his visit to Burma he would also invite opposition group party members to visit Japan after Burma's by-elections, scheduled to be held in 2012.²¹

ANALYSIS

The second visit to Burma by EU Special Advisor Robert Cooper within a period of six months could be a signal that the EU may be considering entering a new phase of dialogue with the Burmese government after nearly two decades. While relations between the two sides have been limited in the past, Mr. Cooper's recent visit could yet prove to become a pivotal foundation in bringing Burma and EU closer than before. While the results or impact of the visit are yet unclear, some observers are believe that the opening of an EU mission in Burma would go a long way to enhancing better understanding and relations and as a result the idea may be further explored.

Due to the restrictive measures imposed on the country by the West in the past, Burma has had to rely on many of its regional neighbours for investment and support. Under such circumstances, Singapore has not only become one of the leading investors in Burma, but also a close ally in the ASEAN regional body. Therefore, Mr Shanmugam's visit is being seen as a means to further enhance friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries.

The small steps to ending six decades of ethnic conflict have taken a further step in the right direction with the recent signing of a ceasefire agreement between the government and the Klo Htoo Baw (DKBA) in the Kayin State. While the ceasefire is far from conclusive, the agreement is a crucial pre-requisite in order for political dialogue to commence. Ethnic grievances run deep, and

²⁰ There will be a peace talk says New Mon State Party (NMSP) Min Thu-ta - <http://monnews.org/?p=3662> (IMNA) 13 December 2011

²¹ Japanese development aid to resume? - <http://mizzima.com/news/regional/6281-japanese-development-aid-to-resume.html> (Mizzima) 15 December 2011 / Japan to invite NLD members, Gemba to tell Suu Kyi in late Dec - <http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/news/20111213p2g00m0dm024000c.html> (Mainichi Daily) 13 December 2011

bringing peace to the country will require more than reaching agreements with the ethnic armed groups.

With the establishment of a new negotiating team and the President's order to the Burmese Army to cease its offensive against the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), U Thein Sein's government is showing signs of embarking on a new and more open political process within which the grievances of the ethnic nationalities can be addressed.

APPENDIX

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ISSUES STATEMENT

The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission issued the following statement on 13 December:

1. A four-member team of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission headed by its Secretary visited Kachin State from 8 to 10 December 2011 in order to observe at first hand the civil population who were displaced as a result of armed skirmishes that occurred from June 2011, with the view to ascertain their conditions in camps that are under the supervision of the Kachin State Government and also to make a need assessment.
2. The team went to Myitkyina, Waingmaw and Bhamo townships and met with the responsible authorities and visited Buddhist monasteries and Christian Churches and met and interviewed the displaced persons. They also visited the Myitkyina General Hospital and again interviewed the patients. There are 59 camps in 11 townships where 14,113 people are cared for under the auspices of the State Government. 51 schools in 10 townships with a student population of 7,872 have to be temporarily closed. The State Government, however, has been able to make arrangements for all students that have arrived at the camps to continue their studies. Currently, there are 3,153 students studying in schools in various vicinities.
3. Under coordination by the Kachin State Government, humanitarian assistance by various government organizations, Civil Society Organization and UN agencies were systematically distributed to the population in the camps and their basic necessities were provided for. However, with the coming of the cold weather, there is a need for warm clothings and blankets. Families were randomly put together in temporary accommodations which pose a challenge to families, particularly, those with young children. From individual interviews, it was evident that almost all wanted to return to their own villages. The children appear to be suffering from psychological trauma and the adults seem to experience a sense of insecurity and diminished confidence.
4. The team from the Commission was able to liaise and coordinate with the concerned authorities to enable the distribution of humanitarian assistance by the Kachin State Government, UN agencies and Civil Society Organizations to the displaced persons in and around Laiza.
5. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission will similarly continue to exert all efforts for enhancing assistance to the displaced persons in the Kachin State.
6. The Commission wishes to make the following observations and recommendations.
 - It acknowledges the effective role of the Kachin State Government in providing basic humanitarian needs to over 14,000 displaced persons that have arrived at their camps.
 - It is particularly gratified that the State Government has been able to distribute in an efficient and systematic manner the material and monetary assistance provided by government organizations, UN agencies, international organizations and the national civil societies.
 - It is happy to note that the children of the displaced persons are able to continue their studies.
 - It acknowledges that the State Government has been able to provide basic health facilities to the displaced persons and 177 patients in the hospital, including the victims of landmines who were given

proper medical attention, thereby, saving their lives. The Commission urges the avoidance of the use of landmines which cause grievous harm to innocent civilians.

- It notes that the donations in cash and kind, provided by the government organizations, Hluttaw Representatives, UN agencies, international organizations and Civil Society Organizations from 9 June to 9 December 2011, amounted to over 1.4 billion kyats. This is in addition to the donations made by religious and social organizations as well as individuals from the region. The Commission urges those business enterprises which have not yet donated to follow suit.
- It is cognizant that the over 14,000 displaced persons in the camps as well as those in Laiza and Maija Yang near the Myanmar-China border had to leave behind their homes and worldly possessions which adversely affected their economic, social and spiritual well-being. The Commission, therefore, strongly urges the armed groups to strive for the restoration of security and stability to the region.
- It also visited Myitkyina Prison on the morning of 9 December 2011 and was able to meet the prisoners in every prison ward. It was found that the prisoners are provided with proper health care and nutrition and the prison sanitary conditions are adequate. The prisoners were able to avail themselves of TV and library facilities. It is found that the prison population exceeds the maximum capacity. The Commission would like to recommend that this condition be redressed at the earliest opportunity. Apart from the religious programs currently provided, programs for all religions should be included.
- It is privileged to acquaint itself with the ongoing peace efforts by both sides which were made possible by the invitation of the Union Government for peace negotiations. The Commission strongly urges that the peace negotiations which would result in the cessation of hostilities, ending of conflicts and bring about peace throughout the nation be carried out to its successful conclusion.
- **The Commission accordingly, strongly welcomes and supports the latest news that the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has instructed the Tatmadaw for the government military forces in the Kachin State not to engage in offensive operations against the KIA and observe a unilateral ceasefire except in self defence. The Commission strongly urges the KIA to reciprocate in the same manner.**²²

²² Myanmar National Human Rights Commission issues statement - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-12-14.pdf> (NLM) 14 December 2011 (p. 9)