

## POLITICAL MONITOR NO.4

### OFFICIAL MEDIA

#### **GOVERNMENT'S PEACE-MAKING WORK COMMITTEE INVITES KIO/KIA FOR TALKS**

The Government's Information Team issued an official statement dated 18 January, stating that the Tatmadaw (government forces) had launched a military offensive against KIO strongholds including Point 771 Hill beginning on 27 December 2012. The attack was reportedly launched in response to recent attacks by the KIO/KIA on the Myitkyina-Bhamo Highway and the bombing of bridges in and around the Lajayan outpost in Kachin State [This is disputed by the KIO]. It also stated that despite the fighting, the government will proceed with ceasefire agreements and a political dialogues in order to make lasting peace with all ethnic armed groups for national reunification and unity. It will also continue peace talks with KIO/KIA. The Union Peace-making Work Committee extended an official letter to the Chairman of the KIO inviting the KIO/KIA to hold peace talks with a view to seeking a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Kachin State. *(Please see Appendix A & B for full statement of the Press Release and Official invitation letter sent by the Union Peace-making Work Committee).*<sup>1</sup>

#### **UN CHIEF HAILS MYANMAR'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF TRUCE IN KACHIN**

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on welcomed the Burmese government's about a ceasefire in Kachin and called on both sides to "make serious efforts to create conditions for sustainable peace" in the region. Ban said in a statement issued by his spokesman that he has been following the various reports from the ground on the implementation of the ceasefire. Myanmar government announced a unilateral ceasefire on 18 January with the ethnic Kachin Independence Army (KIA), saying that the government troops will stop military offensive against the area of Lakyayan starting Jan. 19 at 06:00 a.m. (local time), according to a press release of the government aired by the state TV at night. The unilateral ceasefire was offered as security with the government force members as well as with the Myitkyina-Bhamo highway have been in place, said the release. Ban "calls upon both sides to make serious effort to create conditions for sustained peace in Kachin through enhanced confidence building measures and political dialogue," the statement said.<sup>2</sup>

#### **PRESIDENT U THEIN SEIN RECEIVES FINNISH MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

President Thein Sein received a delegation led by Ms. Heidi Hautala, Minister for International Development of Finland, at the Presidential Palace on 21 January. At the meeting, the two leaders discussed strengthening of friendship and cooperation between the two countries and also touched upon on capacity building for ethnic nationalities development and Finland's assistance in total lifting economic sanctions for economic development of Burma and regaining of its Generalized System of Preference (GSP). The Finnish Minister also met the Burmese Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin and exchanged views on potential for development cooperation between the two countries.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Press Release (3/2013) –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2013-01-19.pdf> (NLM) 19 January 2013 (p. 9)/

Union Peace-making Work Committee invites KIO for peace negotiations –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2013-01-20-red-op.pdf> (NLM) 20 January 2013 (p.7)

<sup>2</sup> UN chief hails Myanmar's announcement of truce in Kachin –

[http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newspaper/221newsn.pdf\(NLM\)](http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newspaper/221newsn.pdf(NLM)) 22 January 2013 (p.8)

<sup>3</sup> President U Thein Sein receives Finnish Minister for International Development –

<http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newspaper/221newsn.pdf> (NLM) 22 January 2013 (p. 1)/

Union Foreign Minister meets Finnish Minister and party –

<http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newspaper/221newsn.pdf> (NLM) 22 January 2013 (p. 16)

## MYANMAR PRESIDENT MEETS INDIAN DEFENCE MINISTER

The visiting Indian Defence Mr AK Antony called on Burmese President U Thein Sein in Naypyitaw on 22 January. The two sides discussed bilateral friendship between the two countries, promotion of cooperation in all sectors, increase of contact between the two peoples, joint efforts on resolving border security and implementation of better transport link to South Asia and South-east Asia regions. Mr Antony also met Burmese Commander-in-Chief Defence Services Snr-General Min Aung Hlaing and Defence Minister Lt-Gen Wai Lwin and exchanged views relating to border management, armed forces interactions and other defence and security matters of interest to both countries.<sup>4</sup>

## PRESIDENT U THEIN SEIN RECEIVES ROK NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER

President Thein Sein received a delegation led by National Assembly Speaker Mr. Kang Chang-Hee of the Republic of Korea on 22 January in Naypyitaw. Discussions between the two were focussed on further promotion of relations between the two peoples, the two parliaments and the two governments, increasing investments and extension of businesses being run in the country. The visiting Korean delegation also met Speaker of the Upper House Khin Aung Myint and Lower House Thura Shwe Mann and discussed economic development and promotion of friendship and cooperation between the parliaments of the two countries.<sup>5</sup>

## HLUTTAW SESSIONS – Highlights

### Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) sessions

The 6<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the First Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) held its 3<sup>rd</sup> day meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January. During the session ten questions were raised and answered. Key issues discussed during the session included the following:

- Daw Dwe Bu of M'Jangyang Constituency (UDPKS) submitted an urgent proposal **urging responsible organizations and the government to stop fighting with KIO/KIA and start making peace talks with them as quickly as possible**;
- Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee U Win Sein submitted the Committee's report;
- Member of Bill Committee Dr Soe Moe Aung read out the committee's report on the bill amending the Civil Procedure Code submitted by the Supreme Court of the Union;
- The session **approved the bill amending the Civil Procedure Code.**<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> President U Thein Sein receives Indian Defence Minister –  
<http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/231newsn.pdf> (NLM) 23 January 2013 (p. 1)/  
Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives foreign guests –  
<http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/231newsn.pdf> (NLM) 23 January 2013 (p. 10)/  
Union Defence Minister meets Indian Defence Minister and party –  
<http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/231newsn.pdf> (NLM) 23 January 2013 (p.7)

<sup>5</sup> President U Thein Sein receives ROK National Assembly Speaker –  
<http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/231newsn.pdf> (NLM) 23 January 2013 (p. 1)/  
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker meets South Korean National Assembly Speaker –  
<http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/231newsn.pdf> (NLM) 23 January 2013 (p. 8)/  
Thura U Shwe Mann attends workshop, meets Korean lawmaker –  
<http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/231newsn.pdf> (NLM) 23 January 2013 (p.8)/  
Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets South Korean National Assembly Speaker –  
<http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/241newsn.pdf> (NLM) 24 January 2013 (p.10)

<sup>6</sup> Proposal on urging responsible organizations and the government to stop fighting with KIO/KIA and start making peace talks as quickly as possible, approved –  
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2013-01-19.pdf> (NLM) 19 January 2013 (p. 16)

The 6<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the First Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) held its 4<sup>th</sup> day meeting on 21<sup>th</sup> January. During the session ten questions were raised and answered. Key issues discussed during the session included the following:

- U Maung Toe of Minhla Constituency (USDP) raised the question on **the status of Burmese migrant workers in Thailand**. In responding, Deputy Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security U Myint Thein stated that **Burmese migrant workers are able to enjoy their legal rights and that 1.3 million temporary passports been issued to date, officials of Burmese embassy and labour attaché had also addressed the occupational problems faced by the migrant workers. Plans are underway to provide legal documents to remaining undocumented migrant workers through the coordination with the Thai government. The Thai Prime Minister agreed to extend the period for three months at the request of the Burmese President. The number of passport issuing counters providing documents for Burmese migrant workers has now increased to 10 and that it was agreed to start issuing passports to Burmese migrant workers ahead of 20 March, which would enable Burmese migrant workers to take out passports at the nearest counters at low cost. In order to prevent increase in number of Burmese migrant workers without documents while so doing, over new 40,000 Burmese workers were sent to Thailand under Burma-Thailand MoU. Measures are being taken to enable offspring of Burmese migrant workers to pursue education in Thailand. So, efforts would be continued to legitimize Burmese migrant workers in Thailand and to enjoy the same rights as those of Thai workers. More labour attaches were dispatched to countries to which most of Burmese migrant workers go including Malaysia and Kuwait. Burma has joined Global Migration Group in November last year and working toward fulfill its objectives.**<sup>7</sup>

The 6<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the First Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) held its 5<sup>th</sup> day meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. During the session a total of 10 questions were raised answered, one report discussed and one bill was submitted. Key questions and issues discussed included the following:

- U Aye Mauk of Mahlaing Constituency (USDP) asked **how much of time it would take for the government to publish and distribute the Farmland Ownership book**. In responding to the question, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Khin Zaw stated that arrangements are being made by the relevant committees concerned for timely completion of farmland ownership registration and issuance of farmland ownership certificates.
- Supreme Court Judge U Aung Zaw Thein submitted a proposal to discuss **the Bill amending the Penal Code** and member of the Bill Committee U Ngun Moun **read out the report of the committee**. The Penal code was enacted on 1 May 1861 and 23 chapters and 511 sections are included in it. The bill amending the Penal Code includes 51 sections. U Phyo Min Thein of Hlegu Constituency (NLD) said that he welcomed the bill to amend the Penal Code which was enacted and has been used since the time of colonial period as some provisions of the law were inappropriate to the present time.<sup>8</sup>

The 6<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the First Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) held its 6<sup>th</sup> day meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. During the session seven questions were raised and answered. Key issues discussed during the session included the following:

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<sup>7</sup> Measures undertaken to legitimize Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand – <http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/221newsn.pdf> (NLM) 22 January 2013 (p. 10)

<sup>8</sup> Bill amending the Penal Code submitted to Pyithu Hluttaw – <http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/231newsn.pdf> (NLM) 23 January 2013 (p. 16)

- U Thein Nyunt of Thingangyun Constituency (NDF) submitted a **Bill amending the Union Judiciary Law**, and member of Bill Committee U Thein Tun Oo **read out the report of the committee.**<sup>9</sup>

The 6<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the First Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) held its 7<sup>th</sup> day meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> January. The Speaker of the Lower House Thura Shwe Mann in addressing the session, stated that parliament will not turn down requests of budget for projects of “bare necessities”, and that special consideration would be given to proposals related to drinking water and agriculture. Key issues and question raised during the session included the following:

- U Aung Thaung of Taungtha Constituency (USDP) submitted a **proposal concerning the scarcity of irrigation, drinking and utility water in arid areas**. In replying to the question, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Khin Zaw said his ministry and the Ministry of Border Affairs would work together in drilling artesian wells in arid zone as the A&I ministry has larger machinery while the latter would assume the responsibility for greening of arid zone;
- Similarly, MP U Aung Thaung of Taungtha Constituency (USDP) said **rural population in arid zone was experiencing shortage of water as the lakes and wells are not in working condition due to natural disasters and draughts**. The Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Thein Htay responded and said **3607 water supply projects included in national comprehensive development plan would be implemented with foreign aids**. He also said **5211 water supply projects being implemented from 2011-2012 FY to 2015-2016 FY would profit the population of 2.79 million**. U Win Oo of Yebyu Constituency (USDP) and U Saw Hla Tun of Chaung-U Constituency (USDP) commented on the said proposal. MP U Aung Thaung (USDP) opted to accept the documentation of his proposal as he found the actions of the respective ministry are “pleasing”.<sup>10</sup>

## HLUTTAW SESSIONS – Highlights

### Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) sessions

The 6<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the First Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) held its 3<sup>rd</sup> day meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January. During the session five questions raised and discussed. Key issues included the following:

- U Khet Htein Nan of Constituency No 1 from Kachin State (UDPKS) urged the Amyotha Hluttaw to **organize a peace mediator or negotiation team as a step for bringing about peace and as a principle to be able to secure ceasefire between the two sides, to make peace and to resume the peace talks politically as there was no signs of easing conflicts despite eleventh negotiations with KIO/KIA since June, 2011**. The peace mediator or negotiation team should be comprised with State level dignitaries, reliable personnel from Hluttaw and leaders from national races who gain trust and respect from both sides and who can manage to negotiate the two sides, he also said in his proposal. He also demanded to stop the fighting and to provide aids to internally displaced people in Kachin State.<sup>11</sup>

The 6<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the First Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) held its 4<sup>th</sup> day meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January. During the session key issues raised and discussed the following:

- Dr Tin Shwe of Yangon Region Constituency No. (6) (NDF) raised the question **on production of rabies vaccine and recruitment of newly-grad doctors from remote areas**, and in responding

<sup>9</sup> Financial and monetary policies being adopted to avoid inflation –  
<http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/241newsn.pdf> (NLM) 24 January 2013 (p. 16)

<sup>10</sup> Do not hesitate to request budget for projects of “bare necessities”, says Speaker –  
<http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/251newsn.pdf> (NLM) 25 January 2013 (p. 1)

<sup>11</sup> Union Government urged to lay down firm basic principles which can help build trust between two sides to be able to bring about eternal peace –  
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2013-01-19.pdf> (NLM) 19 January 2013 (p. 16)

the Health Minister Dr Pe Thet Khin stated that **the country's rabies vaccine production met the demand and a total of 16725 units of vaccines were distributed to regions and states in 2011-2012 fiscal year. He said the ministry is not responsible for recruiting new assistant doctors and that this was the responsibility of the Union Civil Services Board, and that the capacity is the only criterion used when considering new recruits.**

- U Paul Htan Htaing of Chin State Constituency No (3) (CNP) submitted the proposal urging **the Union government to give special priority for health and education of remote regions than other relatively developed areas.** Eight MPs commented on the proposal.<sup>12</sup>

The 6<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the First Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) held its 5<sup>th</sup> day meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. During the session four questions were raised and answered. Key issues discussed included the following:

- Dr Tin Shwe of Yangon Region Constituency No. (6) (USDP) asked if there is a **plan for recording the number of persons with disabilities when the nationwide census is under-taken in 2014.** In response to the question, Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population U Win Myint said that there is such plan and the census questionnaire will have a separate column with question about the disability specifications;
- U Paul Htan Htaing of Chin State Constituency (CNP) submitted a **proposal urging the Union government to ease more regulations in education and health sectors of remote regions with social barriers than relatively developed regions.** The Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Zaw Win replied that **the standard requirements of the teachers are less restricted in those regions and priority is given to local national people for teaching positions and the Ministry of Health is also taking actions depending on the requirement of the regions regardless of its populace. The proposal was discussed by four MPs and was approved as the majority voted in favour of the proposal;**
- U Saw Tun Mya Aung of Kayin State Constituency No (5) (USDP) submitted a proposal urging **the Union government to improve rural-centered monastic education system based on Myanmar traditional culture. The Hluttaw decided to put the proposal on record.**<sup>13</sup>

The 6<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the First Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) held its 6<sup>th</sup> day meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. During the session the following questions were raised and answered:

- U Myo Myint of Mandalay Region Constituency No (6) (USDP) urged the Union government to **form the Ayeyawady River Commission (ARC) to ensure eternity of Ayeyawady River, the national river of Myanmar, citing that Ayeyawady River contributes to all-round development of all Myanmar citizens. He called for formation of an establishment to be constituted with people from all walks of life and various organizations, taking an example of The Mekong River Commission (MRC) to make sure effective inter-coordination;**
- U Tin Yu of Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee **read the report of the committee on Vacant, Fellow and Virgin Land Management Bylaws sent by Pyithu Hluttaw with amendments, suggestions and approving the amendments.** Amyotha Hluttaw Representative Dr Htay Win of Ayeyawady Region Constituency No (5) (USDP) expressed his views on the bylaws that they can guarantee poverty reduction enabling the landless and true growers to use the vacant, fellow and virgin land to emerge as a result. **The session approved the bylaws as supplemented and amended by the Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House).**

<sup>12</sup> Questions on rabies vaccine, doctor recruitment answered at Amyotha Hluttaw – <http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/221newsn.pdf> (NLM) 22 January 2013 (p. 10)

<sup>13</sup> Myanmar maintains cordial relationship with global countries, establishes diplomatic ties with 109 countries – <http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/231newsn.pdf> (NLM) 23 January 2013 (p. 16)



- Dr Myint Kyi of Yangon Constituency No (8) (USDP) urged the Union government **to start atomic power generation as Myanmar is a member of ASEAN as well as IAEA.** U Hla Swe of Magway Region Constituency No (12) (USDP) seconded the proposal and **the Hluttaw approved to discuss it.**<sup>14</sup>

The 6<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the First Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) held its 7<sup>th</sup> day meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> January. During the session the following questions were raised and answered:

- U Win Naung of Yangon Region Constituency No (5) (USDP) seconded the proposal of U Khet Htein Nam from Kachin State Constituency No (1) (UDPKS) urging the **Union government to adopt firm principles which can help build mutual understanding to be able to bring about internal peace. He called for negotiation between the leaders of two sides at the table to establish internal peace, voicing his concerns for current plight of Kachin State where schools are torn and businesses are ruined ;**
- A Defence Services Personnel Hluttaw Representative Col Aung Kyaw in responding to the proposal by MP Khet Htein Nam (UDPKS) stated that **all the previous peace talks between the government and KIO/KIA came to vain because of the latter's over-focus on political dialogue rather than the international practice of ceasefire first and political dialogue second, adding that the government has been providing shelter to 32434 internally displaced persons in 11 townships and sub-townships in Kachin State.** The humanitarian assistance in the form of cash and kind from the President, government ministries and departments, social organizations, the Red Cross, and MPs amounted to K 6,737,476,797. Section 339 of **the Constitution stated that "the Defence Services shall lead in safeguarding the Union against all internal and external dangers and thus the military action taken against the KIO/KIA by the Tatmadaw is not only in line with the Constitution but also serving to protect the interests of the people."**<sup>15</sup>

## UNOFFICIAL MEDIA

### FIERCE BATTLES RAGE ACROSS KACHIN REGION

Fierce battles for the control of Hkaya Bum, a strategic hill located between Laja-yang and Laiza, raged as Burmese army's offensive operations continue. Burmese army infantry units made several unsuccessful attempts to capture KIA's Hkaya post in the past days after President Thein Sein declared unilateral ceasefire in Laja-yang area. Burmese troops under 88th LID and 130th LIB who are currently stationed at former KIA's 5th Brigade's Bumre, Tibet, and Wai Maw post fired with artillery shells for 130 times on Hkaya Bum, reported a front-line source. KIA padang sector troops fought against an unknown Burmese army infantry unit near border post no. 6 located in Pangwa area on Jan 23 at 9:40 am. A local source says 2 helicopters transported combat troops and military equipments to Lupi, near Pangwa. On Jan 22, a battle took place between KIA's 27th Battalion under 3rd Brigade and Burmese army's 68th LIR between Man Yeng and Kawng Hka village at 4:30 pm. Another battle took place at Zin Lum Kaji Hkyet between KIA's 21st Battalion and an unknown Burmese army infantry unit on Jan 22 at 2 pm. In northern Shan state front, a series of battles took place between KIA's 34th Battalion under 4th Brigade and Burmese army's 130th LIR at Pan Sau village located between Man Tong and Namtu town on Jan 22. KIA's 8th Battalion under 4th Brigade fought an unknown Burmese army unit at Na-Un village on Jan 22 at 8 am. Heavy battles rage for the whole day between KIA's 6th Battalion under 2nd Brigade and Burmese army at Gwi Hka and Maw Galung in Hpakant township on Jan 23. More and more infantry units have arrived in

<sup>14</sup> MP urges to form Ayeyawady River Commission for eternity of Ayeyawady River – <http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/241newsn.pdf> (NLM) 24 January 2013 (p. 16)

<sup>15</sup> KIO/KIA urged to accept President's invitation and come to negotiation table: MPs – <http://www.mrtv3.net.mm/newpaper/251newsn.pdf> (NLM) 25 January 2013 (p. 16)

Hpakant area as fighting escalated in recent days. Some government troops from northern Shan state have been transported to Hpakant area” said a local resident.<sup>16</sup>

### **GOVT AND DONORS FORGE AID PLANS FOR BURMA**

At the first ever Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum on 20 January, the government and donor countries, aid agencies and international development banks signed the so-called Naypyidaw Accord, a non-binding agreement that sets out guidelines on government-donor cooperation. The 5-page Naypyidaw Accord, lists a number of obligations for both the government and donors as they implement the government’s reform policies and aid projects. The government for instance, agrees to maintain a high-level dialogue with the donors about its national and regional development policies. It also promises to strengthen the rule of law, respect human rights, improve public administration, and include civil society organizations in the government decision-making process. Donors for their part agree to “align assistance” projects with the government policies that cover fields such as education, health, poverty reduction and economic development. The accord did not make any specific mention of the role of ethnic groups in future government-donor cooperation, other than stipulating that the government would “engage strongly... in participatory approaches, including providing a greater voice to women, minorities and marginalized people.”

Steve Marshall, the International Labor Organization’s liaison officer in Burma, said the Naypyidaw Accord would help ensure good coordination between government policies and donor projects as foreign aid begins to flow into Burma. “This is basically about trying to ensure that there is added value to the aid cooperation and we get a better return on the aid dollars” being spent and these principles are being applied elsewhere in developing countries too,” he added.

At the meeting, the government outlined its broad reform plans for the coming years in its Framework for Economic and Social Reforms, which was presented to donors. President Thein Sein told the meeting these reforms would be “people-centered” and focus on “10 priority areas such as finance and revenue, relaxation of restrictions on trade and foreign investment, development of the private sector, education and health sectors, food security and development of the agricultural sector, transparency in government, the mobile phone and internet systems, and development of the basic infrastructure.”<sup>17</sup>

### **MORE DETAILS EMERGE ON GOVERNMENT TALKS WITH KAREN SPLINTER GROUP**

More details of government’s talks with the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army earlier this week have been released, with the government saying the talks were to prevent clashes between its border guard units and Karen troops. The three-hour discussion was held in Myawady of Kayin State on 22 January. The DKBA delegation was led by Maj-General Saw La Pwe. The government’s delegation included union level peace-making body vice-chairman Aung Min and People’s Militia and Border Guard Force Director-General Major General Maung Than. “Both sides discussed handing over weapons seized by the DKBA from the border guard forces and an agreement to prevent further clashes,” said DKBA spokesman Major Saw Hsan Aung. Local news media sources quoted Aung Min as saying that the discussion was focused on the deployment of troops, opening of liaison offices and meals and accommodations for DKBA members. The government and DKBA reached a ceasefire agreement in November 2011. It is a breakaway group of the Karen National Liberation Army, the armed wing of the Karen National Union, Myanmar’s largest armed ethnic group.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Fierce battles rage across Kachin region –  
<http://kachinlandnews.com/?p=22991> (Kachinland News) 24 January 2013

<sup>17</sup> Govt and donors forge aid plans for Burma –  
<http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/24867> (Irrawaddy) 22 January 2013

<sup>18</sup> More details emerge on Tuesday’s talks with Karen splinter group –  
<http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/2232-more-details-emerge-on-tuesday-s-talks-with-karen-splinter-group>  
(Eleven News Media) 24 January 2013

## **ANALYSIS**

President Thein Sein announced a ceasefire on 19 January. But on the ground in Kachin State, the Tatmadaw continued its military offensive against KIA positions.

The Burmese Parliament has also urged the government to take a firm stand to end the conflict. But to date, the military component of the government has not complied with the desire of the government or the parliament. This has led many to ponder the unity or disunity within the administration regarding the Kachin crisis.

The key question between the government and the KIO/KIA is the issue of 'political dialogue'. While both sides have acknowledged the need to conduct peace talks, the lack of trust as well as understanding between the two sides has fuelled the on-going fighting. The conflict has thus far created animosity on both sides and should the situation remain unchanged could deter not only to the government's reforms but also disrupt the national reconciliation process.

It seems that the government and the KIA cannot resolve the problem by themselves. One possibility would to introduce third-party intervention either by the UN or regional institutions. While this may not be the ideal scenario, the prevailing situation demands the need for a non-biased and most importantly to end the fighting and begin serious talks. And in doing so, both sides should avoid using the blame game tactics but more importantly ready to make compromises if they are genuinely committed in achieving sustainable peace.



## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A:**

#### **PRESS RELEASE (3/2013)**

#### **Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

#### **Information Team**

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Pyatho, 1374 ME**

**18<sup>th</sup> January, 2013**

1. KIO/KIA troops had been surrounding Lajayan outpost, ambushing military columns which are transporting rations to Lajayan outpost, blocking Myitkyina-Bhamo Union Highway disabling public use, and blasting bridges since March 2012 in Lajayan of Kachin State. The Tatmadaw therefore had to launch attack on KIO/KIA strongholds including Point 771 hill beginning 27 December, 2012.
2. The Tatmadaw, since the resumption of fight between it and KIO/KIA in June 2011, had launched counter-firing only for self-defence in line with instructions of the President. However 35 Tatmadaw men fell and 190 were wounded as KIO/KIA troops ambushed military convoys transporting rations to Tatmadaw men in Lajayan outpost for three times. Lajayan outpost has been a military outpost from which the Tatmadaw troops undertook regional security even before ceasefire agreement in 1994 (before KIO/KIA had built their Laiza Camp) and the Tatmadaw troops had also informed KIO/KIA that rations would be transported to the outpost. In spite of this, KIO/ KIA intercepted those convoys. As foodstuffs could not be sent to Lajayan outpost, rations ran out there and the Tatmadaw men therefore had to clear unavoidably the areas of KIO/KIA just for survival.
3. The army asked supporting fire from the Air Force just to make sure accurate hitting of KIO/ KIA targets and to avoid hitting civilian targets. KIO/KIA troops had sieged the Lajayan outpost setting up barbed wire cutting off its contact with outside world and thus Tatmadaw men there had nothing to choose but to fight. Though the Tatmadaw had decided to move its outposts through negotiations at table, KIO/KIA failed to come to the table. Their rejection of invitation from the government and failure to come to Shweli negotiation had led to aforesaid fights.
4. The Tatmadaw as it has achieved limited objectives for security of Myitkyina-Bhamo Union Highway will stop its operation beginning 0600 hrs on 19 January, 2013.
5. The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services reaffirmed that the military would strictly adhere to the instruction of the President not to fight except for self-defence. Nonetheless, both sides will need to stop fighting so as to ease tensions in the armed conflict. Therefore, KIO/KIA is urged to order its troops not to attack the Tatmadaw troops first. Studying the previous events, until the instruction from President Office was issued, KIO/KIA had blasted roads and bridges for 122 times, attacked military outposts for 64 times, robbed for 60 times, recruited and abducted civilians for 28 times while civilians came under mine attacks for 30 times. KIO/KIA troops engaged with military columns for 1095 times and many officers and other ranks were killed and wounded in those incidents.
6. In addition, KIO/KIA troops should not block or blast motor roads and railroads in public use in consideration of the people who are in trouble due to skirmishes in Kachin State. For the time being, as KIO/KIA troops have mounted mine blast attacks on Mandalay-Myitkyina Railroad for 56 times, Myitkyina-Sumprabum-Putao Railroad for 15 times, and Myitkyina-Bhamo motor road for 42 times, killing and wounding civilians and disrupting normal transportation. The attacks have resulted in commodity price rise in Kachin State, particularly locals in Putao are facing shortage of food and the Tatmadaw has sent food supplies to the area by military plane. As the Tatmadaw has instructed its troops not to attack civilian targets, KIO/KIO on its part will need to stop attacking public transportation facilities like railroads and motor roads. Only then military tensions will ease and economic, social assistance could be given and rehabilitation works undertaken more for locals.

7. The government will proceed with ceasefire agreements to strong political dialogues in order to make lasting peace with all ethnic armed groups for national reunification and unity. It will also continue peace talks with KIO/KIA. In future negotiations, decision makers from KIO/KIA need to negotiate with the representatives from the Tatmadaw.
8. The government is ready to join hands with all national people including KIO/KIA to be able to build peace and national unity in Kachin State.

Information Team<sup>19</sup>

#### Appendix B:

#### UNION PEACE-MAKING WORK COMMITTEE INVITES KIO FOR PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

Union Peace-making Work Committee has reportedly sent a letter dated today addressing to Chairman of Kachin Independence Organization U Zaung Haya inviting to hold peace talks with KIO and the following the full text of translation of the letter.

To  
U Zaung Haya  
Chairman  
Kachin Independence Organization  
**Subject: Invitation for negotiation**

1. Responsible parties were urged through Pyithu Hluttaw at its second day sixth regular session on 11 January to publicize the electronic online negotiation in a transparent manner while both sides find it difficult to enter negotiation at table for ongoing armed conflicts in Kachin State and to build understanding and then trust through negotiations paying attention to voices of the people to ease military tensions to pave the way for lasting peace.
2. The Union Peace-making Work Committee would also like to hold peace negotiations with Kachin Independence Organization.
3. We are looking forward to your reply.

Secretary  
Union Peace-making Work Committee<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Press Release (3/2013) –  
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2013-01-19.pdf> (NLM) 19 January 2013 (p. 9)

<sup>20</sup> Union Peace-making Work Committee invites KIO for peace negotiations –  
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/NLM2013-01-20-red-op.pdf> (NLM) 20 January 2013 (p.7)