

**85 Karen Organizations urgently appeal to the Karen armed organizations (KNU/KNLA, DKBA, KNU/KNLA-PC and Karen BGF) not to cooperate with the Myanmar military junta's illegitimate dictator-government**

14 February 2021

1. On February 1st 2021, the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) seized power and arrested National League for Democracy (NLD) leaders including State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint, who won the 2020 democratic general election. As a consequence we Karen must conclude that all democratization processes, the 2008 constitution, the centralized peace process, and the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) and its mechanisms have been rendered null.
2. The Tatmadaw's establishment of a new 'Peace Talks Committee' right after the election in November 2020, the one month extension of the unilateral nationwide ceasefire (extended from the January 31st to February 28th, 2021), the inclusion of some ethnic political party leaders in the newly formed military government councils, and the announcement of five national goals on the 74th anniversary of the Union Day on February 12, 2021, are all political maneuverings to further consolidate the military coup and to sustain military dictatorship for the benefits of a few top generals. These actions offer no benefits for citizens and ethnic nationalities of Myanmar.
3. While mass public protests are held against the military dictatorship, which forcibly seized state power in violation of democratic norms, and while civil servants are participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), the Tatmadaw has continued to send more troops into Karen areas, expanded its military operations, and increased its military offensive against Karen National Liberation Army. The Tatmadaw is also continuing to fire mortars into Karen villages. In particular, the ongoing Tatmadaw military offensive in the KNU's Kler Lwee Htoo (Brigade 3) and Mutraw (Brigade 5) Districts has displaced more than 5,000 people and they are now living in fear in the jungle.
4. The current pro-democracy movement aims to "resolve political problems through political means", which would include allowing the Tatmadaw the opportunity to solve alleged voter fraud through legal processes and/or dialogue. In addition, were the Tatmadaw sincerely attempting to resolve armed conflicts and build genuine peace with the Ethnic Armed Revolutionary Organizations (EAROs) they could have done it in accordance with the terms of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). However, they have chosen none of the above options to work within a legal framework, but instead have continuously resorted to violent means and heinous acts even after their military power takeover.
5. By reflecting on the above circumstances, the undersigned Karen organizations have concluded that the political and democratic spaces created under the previous quasi-civilian governments have all been nullified as a result of the Tatmadaw's coup d'état and continued breaches of the NCA. It is absolutely impossible for EAROs, ethnic political parties, NLD government, and civil society organizations to participate in the military dictator-led processes to achieve national reconciliation, peace building and the emergence of a federal democratic constitution. Peace and democracy cannot

happen by means of force. Any actions enabled through military dictatorship will create more conflict and division, and legitimise and prolong the military's grip on power.

6. Today, our common enemy is General Min Aung Hlaing and his military cronies - the violators of the rule of law, democracy and human rights, who have been indicted at the International Court of Justice for crimes against humanity and war crimes. As the whole country is under the rule of a violent totalitarian regime, the lives of all citizens including the Burman and the non-Burman ethnic nationalities living both in urban and rural areas are in great danger.
7. Therefore, we, the following 85 Karen organizations are urging the KNU/KNLA, DKBA, KNU/KNLA-PC and Karen BGF, who have pledged to work towards self-determination, ethnic equality, and the emergence of a genuine federal democracy, to immediately take the following actions:
  - a. All Karen armed groups must recognize the Min Aung Hlaing-led military junta as illegal, illegitimate, and violent. Therefore they must cease any and all relationships which legitimize the military junta such as peace talks, political, military, and economic affairs until the pro-democracy and ethnic nationalities' demands are met. These actions will demonstrate solidarity with all ethnic nationalities across Myanmar who are mobilizing, including the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), and the actions that the international community have already taken against the military dictatorship. These collective struggles will contribute to the rapid and final fall of military rule. The time has come to make this important decision. The people, especially young people are already courageously at the forefront of this movement;
  - b. All Karen armed groups must work together and protect their administrative territories and rights to self-determination, and to protect the lives and property of the Karen people. In addition, the KNLA must take decisive action against the Tatmadaw who have already threatened the lives of more than 5,000 Karen IDPs in Kler Lwee Htoo and Mutraw Districts;
  - c. All Karen armed groups must join together and avoid military confrontation between each other. Karen armed groups must go forward with the understanding that: 'It harms the whole nation when one is harmed', and move towards a unified Kawthoolei Armed Force under a single Karen national flag;
  - d. At a time when solving political problems by political means is increasingly difficult, seek ways to rebuild stronger political and military alliances with other Ethnic Armed Revolutionary Organizations; and
  - e. All Karen armed groups must openly and decisively support the current pro-democracy movement of the people throughout the country, cooperate with the people in the best way they can, protect the lives of civilians, and work towards the formation of an interim government and the drafting of a federal democratic constitution.

**Below are undersigned civil society organizations:**

1. Alone Karen Community
2. Burma Medical Association
3. Back Pack Health Worker Team
4. Bethesda Home Education Center
5. Bogalay Karen Community
6. Calgary Karen Community (CKCA)
7. Candle Light (ပန်တကမ္ဘော်)
8. Edmonton Karen Community Youth Organization
9. European Karen Network
10. Hlaingbwe Youth
11. International Karen Organization (IKO)
12. Insein Karen Community
13. Karen Community of Canada (KCC)
14. Karen Community Society of British Columbia (KCSBC)
15. Karen Community of Lethbridge
16. Karen Community of Regina
17. Karen Community of Saskatoon
18. Karen Community of Winnipeg
19. Karen Community of Thunderbay
20. Karen Community of Toronto
21. Karen Community of Kitchener & Waterloo
22. Karen Community of Hamilton
23. Karen Community of London
24. Karen Community of Windsor
25. Karen Community of Leamington
26. Karen Community of Ottawa
27. Karen Community of Ireland
28. Karen Community of Israel
29. Karen Community of Finland
30. Karen Community of Czech Republic
31. Karen Community of Norway
32. Karen Community of Utica New York (USA)
33. Kyautkyi Development Watch
34. Karen Environmental and Social Action Network
35. Karen Grassroots Women Network
36. Karen Human Rights Group
37. Karen-Korea Joint Mission and Education Center
38. Korea Karen Organization
39. Korea Karen Youth Organization
40. Karen Organization for Relief and Development
41. Karen Peace Support Network
42. Karen Rivers Watch
43. Karen Refugee Committee
44. Karen Swedish Community
45. Karen Student Association-CMU
46. Karen Student Association

47. Karen Student Network Group
48. Karen Teacher Working Group
49. Karen Thai Group (KTG)
50. Karen Women Organization
51. Karen Women Empowerment Group
52. Karen Youth-Yangon
53. Karen Youth Network
54. Karen Youth of Toronto
55. Karen Youth of Norway
56. Kayin State MATA
57. Kayin FLEGT Working Group
58. Minglardon Karen Community
59. Oversea Karen Organization Japan
60. Pathein East Learning Center
61. Southern Youth Group
62. Thwee Community Development Network
63. Tawwin Thazin Women Group
64. Trip Net
65. Taw Naw Green Network
66. ပဝလူထုအခြေပြုရေရှည်တည်တံ့ခိုင်မြဲရေးကော်မတီ
67. ပုလောဌာနေတိုင်းရင်းသားချိတ်ဆက်မှုကော်မတီ
68. ခိုင်မြဲသစ္စာဖြိုးရေးကော်မတီ
69. အနာဂတ်အလင်းဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးကော်မတီ
70. အလင်းသစ္စာဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးကော်မတီ
71. အလင်းရောင်ပန်းတိုင်ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးကော်မတီ
72. ရေးအေးမိတ်ဖက်ဖွံ့ဖြိုးကော်မတီ
73. အနာဂတ်အားမာန်ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးကော်မတီ
74. ရှမ်းထင်းမယ် ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးကော်မတီ
75. အာဂါတ်ရောင်ခြည်ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးကော်မတီ
76. ရန်ကုန်တိုင်းမြောက်ပိုင်းကရင်စာပေနှင့်ယဉ်ကျေးမှုအဖွဲ့
77. တိုက်ကြီးမြို့နယ် စာပေယဉ်ကျေးမှုအဖွဲ့
78. လက်ပြန်ဒိုးကရင်ပြည်သူ့လူထု
79. ထေရီဝါးလူကရင်ပြည်သူ့လူထု
80. စစ်တောင်းသံစဉ်ဒေသခံအပစ်အခတ်စောင့်ကြည့်ရေးအဖွဲ့
81. သဘာဝချစ်သူများအဖွဲ့ (ဘောကထဒေသ)
82. မုန်းချောင်းချစ်သူအဖွဲ့
83. သံလွင်ကွန်ယက်အဖွဲ့
84. မရင်းကုန်းလူငယ်အဖွဲ့
85. ကျိုဒုံးဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးအဖွဲ့

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