



အိန္ဒြေလယာကဠိဒီကလုန်ကရု

Australian Karen Organisation

30 August 2021

POSITION STATEMENT ON KNU MINISTER SHWE MAUNG'S LETTER OF 24 AUGUST 2021

1. On the 24th of August 2021, KNU Minister Saw Shwe Maung issued a letter to the Karen Military Brigades, Battalions, and Township Administration Offices. The subject letter advised that the Burmese Coup Military and Border Guard Force (BGF) would be entering the Karen liberated areas, to conduct unwarranted searches for those who identified as members of the People's Defence Forces (PDF) and National Unity Government (NUG).
2. On the 19th of August 2021, Myanmar Military Coup Council's Deputy General Soe Win attended at the Burmese Military Brigade 44 stationed in Thaton District to command the advancement of the major offensive on the Karen National Union (KNU). This resulted in the Burmese Military and BGF troops entering the KNU controlled areas with forced violence.
3. Upon attack, Karen villagers were threatened to vacate their homes within two days, when the offensive would be increased. The KNU has since reported there being more than 81 army clashes between its troops and the opposing BGF and Burmese Military, ascending within Thaton District, Taungoo District, Nyaunglebin Township, and Papun District, since the 1st of August 2021.
4. Notwithstanding Minister Shwe Maung's repeated assertion that (as their representative) the KNU's underlying objective is to succeed in negotiation by way of political solution rather than the Myanmar Military's violent approach, his actions and blatant disregard for the present situation of the Karen has been to the contrary; further disdaining the genuine efforts of the democratic forces (including NUG and PDF) to end military rule and rebuild the future Federal Democratic Union of Myanmar. The Minister's ill-intentions are evident in his cooperating with the Myanmar Military's scheme for illegitimate control of the liberated areas and people.
5. Pursuant to the KNU Media Release of the 2nd February 2021, the Myanmar Military Coup has been strongly condemned, along with the Myanmar Police forces for their excessive violence against peaceful civilian protestors. The KNU has since allied with the entire population of Myanmar standing against the Coup in striving to transition to a democratic Burma.
6. The KNU's condemnation of the Military Coup has been reaffirmed by the bodies which are also signatories to the Nationwide Cease Fire (NCA). These bodies have collectively undertaken to suspend their involvement in the National Peace Conference with the Myanmar Military junta for as long as the Coup persists. In expressing their full support for the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), the signatories have also confirmed their intent to assist the CDM by all means necessary, alongside the democratic forces within Burma, abroad, and the International Community.
7. The premise upon which Minister Shwe Maung's letter of the 24th of August 2021 is based, together with his misconduct in cooperating with the Myanmar Military Coup, contradicts the principled objectives of the Karen National Union and their above-mentioned Media Release, entirely.
8. The Minister's cooperation with the advancement of the Military Coup's offensive including their plan to arrest and detain members of democratic forces, whilst assaulting any civilian who is seen to be in support of such, would constitute as crimes against humanity and war crimes, and deemed to be breaches of Articles 3 and 5 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

9. Despite being issued an order for provisional measures by the International Court of Justice to prevent genocidal acts, the Myanmar Military junta has continued to commit crimes against humanity. In assisting the junta and representing the KNU, Minister Saw Shwe Maung's intentions and actions evidently misrepresent the founding principles of the Karen National Union on a global scale.

The Australian Karen Organisation Inc. continues to encourage the KNU, Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO) in working with PDF, Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs), CDM, NUG (all inclusive of domestic and international democratic forces) to end the Myanmar Military rule, and strive for the future Federal Democratic Union of Myanmar.

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