



Statement Condemning the Offensive Operation of the Military Council in Northern and North-Western Parts of Myanmar (Burma)

1. Apparently, the Myanmar Army is preparing for the so-called “**Anawrahta Operation**”¹ to wage an offensive military campaign in the Northern and Northwestern regions of Myanmar (Burma).² The local residents in these locations may inevitably encounter grave crimes of international concern (Crimes against Humanity, Genocide and War Crimes) due to this operation.
2. Looking back the military strategy of the successive military regimes, it tends to suspend all clashes and military activities in other areas, when it plans to launch military campaign in a particularly targeted area.³ Before initiating the “Anawrahta Operation” in the Northern and Northwestern Myanmar (Burma), the Myanmar Army managed to suspend military activities by entering truce⁴ with certain Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs) based in

¹ “Local defense forces PDF to face Anawrahta Operation” BBC (19 October 2021) https://www.bbc.com/burmese/burma-58976376?fbclid=IwAR1dbUcKxa1Ztxl629n-aJ5a6Nagam7ErrRGesUa5xwKq-1nlue3m_nyn80 (accessed 26 October 2021)

² “The military council troops, stationed in Paletwa, mobilized to Mindat, Kanpetlet townships and Sagaing Region” Mizzima (21 September 2021) <https://www.facebook.com/216265185075061/posts/4793130514055149/?sfnsn=mo> Myanmar: UN expert fears spike in atrocities amid reports of troops massing in north (22 October 2021) <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?LangID=E&NewsID=27693> (accessed 27 October 2021)

³ During late 1980s, the Myanmar Army deescalated clashes with EROs based in northern Burma including Kachin Independent Organization (KIO) by organizing sham peace talks in order to eliminate the Communist Party of Burma (CPB). After the dissolution of CPB in 1989, the Myanmar Army entered ceasefire agreement with EROs in northern Burma one group after another, while the EROs in southern parts were suffering from Myanmar Army’s deadliest offensive. Subsequently, the EROs in northern Burma were pacified by the regime with State level ceasefire agreement when clashes with KIO were resumed in Kachin and Northern Shan State in 2011. Moreover, in late 2018, when the Myanmar Army launched military campaign against the Arakan Army (AA) in western Rakhine State, it managed to cease military activities in southern Burma and reduced momentum of war in Northern Burma.

⁴ “Myanmar Regime Shores Up Ties With Two Powerful Northern Ethnic Armies” The Irrawaddy (10 April 2021)

Northeastern and Western parts of Myanmar (Burma).⁵ This implies that the Myanmar Army is using divide and rule strategy to impose brutal oppression on their targeted area.

3. Legal Aid Network (LAN) condemns the “Anawrahta Operation” in the strongest terms, which usually carries indiscriminate attack on civilian targets and disproportionate use of force that may amount to violation of Geneva Conventions.
4. Undoubtedly, due to this military campaign, the local residents in those areas may be subjected to the grave crimes of international concern. Hence, the respective forces and organizations must act to protect the vulnerable from these preventable atrocities. LAN calls on:
 - (a) All armed forces to respect Geneva Conventions and strictly adhere to the rules of war in armed conflicts.
 - (b) Local administrations and humanitarian organizations including the National Unity Government (NUG) to prepare in advance to save lives and provide humanitarian aids to the target areas.
 - (c) International and national legal organizations, civil society organizations and Medias to take effective measures to prosecute the perpetrators of such crimes at both international and domestic courts.
 - (d) Ethnic Resistance Organizations and People’s Defense Forces to steadfastly stand against the divide and rule strategy of the successive regimes.
 - (e) International communities, organizations and individuals that are supporting the Myanmar Army in terms of financial, arm sales, technology as well as diplomacy to cut ties with the regime.

Legal Aid Network

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For more information, please contact;

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-regime-shores-ties-two-powerful-northern-ethnic-armies.html>
(accessed 26 October 2021)

“Myanmar Regime continuously meet Northern Alliance including WA” Shan News (8 April 2021)

<https://burmese.shannews.org/archives/21591> (accessed 16 October 2021)

⁵ The Myanmar Army entered ceasefire with the powerful EROs in far northeastern Burma since in the past 30 years. Also, it has agreed to a truce with the Arakan Army (AA) in late 2020, which could threaten the regime in western Burma.

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