



H.E.DR. SASA'S MESSAGE ON THE 74TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHIN NATIONAL DAY

20 February 2022

Today we mark the 74th Chin national day. I wish first and foremost to extend my warmest greetings to all my Chin brothers and sisters, whether in Myanmar, or in the diaspora community, who are united on this day in celebrating our identity and heritage. We, the Chin, are a proud, independent, and free people. Our history is one of a fiercely independent people, ruled by Chin monarchs, and unburdened by foreign invaders and colonizers.

It was under the British that we first lost our independence, and first knew subjugation. We determined then that we should once again be free, as we had been for all our history before the British rule. We, with the many peoples of Myanmar fought against British rule, and united with the Burma and ethnic minority leaders in Panglong to set aside our differences and forge a new nation with freedom and self-determination for all. But before we could even celebrate our victory, many of the nation's leading political minds were gunned down and the country fell into chaos. It became clear then that we would be faced with yet another colonizer – this time from within- the Tatmadaw. We are certain that the Tatmadaw's rule too will be broken, and the light of freedom and prosperity will yet shine on Chinland.

The same light that shone on the faces of our ancestors. A freedom that was not given – but was taken; and was fought for. It was defended tooth and nail. Those who came before us never shied away from what is right, and what is necessary and we will honor our ancestors' memories, and follow in their footsteps to liberate our people. Lest we forget that we even took up the fight half way across the world in 1914, to defend free European people. Now, over a thousand of our people's bodies lie in the battlefields of France, a silent testament to the courage and resolve of the Chin to fight for what is right. To take up a just cause, anywhere, and to defend a wronged people, whoever they may be. This is the legacy of the Chin. And it is a legacy we must never forget. It is our solemn duty, borne in our blood, to live up to and carry on the great work of those who came before us. It is our privilege, to which we are bound by honor, to protect and preserve our heritage, our culture, and our identity. And in that same spirit we ask our allies and supporters the world over to reflect on the contributions of the Chin, and rally to our cause in our time of need, because our cause is just, and righteous, and because without the support of our international partners, hundreds, if not thousands more will die needlessly, in the prolonged violence and destruction.

Let there be no mistake, our beloved Chin homeland has been desecrated by the Myanmar military. For decades we struggled to build and advance our homeland, but whenever we took a step forward, the military came to beat us back down. Despite regular and repeated abuse, we continued to stand up and push forward, refusing to bow to a despotic regime. The military's attacks have only worsened since the coup. Today, our fields lie burned and fallow, our people have no food to eat, our women and girls are being raped, our homes have been bombed or burned, a full fifth of our people have fled the military's cruelty, hiding in the rivers, valleys, jungles, mountains, and forests, trying to survive the unforgiving climate with nowhere to go, and nothing to eat. Those who are fortunate, have managed to cross the border and find themselves in a foreign land with nothing but, at least, a respite from the military. This senseless barbarism will continue as long as the Tatmadaw believes it can get away with its crimes. As



long as the Tatmadaw believes that terrorism will cow and scare the Chin people into submission. As long as we see no international response to the atrocities.

The direct damage of the military yet pales in comparison to the indirect damage they have done. Our agriculture and industries have been razed – we will be unable to support or feed ourselves for years to come. The overwhelming majority of Chin in Chin land have yet to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, meanwhile the disease burns through our homeland unchecked, every transmission raising the risks of a new variant sweeping the continent.

To call the situation dire is an understatement. The suffering of the Chin is beyond comprehension for those who can take things like food, shelter, physical safety, and medical care for granted. But the world must know, and must understand, that the situation in Chin, as in much of Myanmar, is intolerable. We need the support and assistance of the international community to protect ourselves, and push back the military aggressor.

Our traditional values are the same values we are fighting and giving our lives for today. Self-determination, equality, and freedom of culture, freedom of religion, freedom of identity. These more cherished values are what is at risk today if we drop our guard, and let the military take the upper hand. But our resolve is strong, our commitment is unshakeable. We will continue this fight to the bitter end, and we will either live free, or at the very least, die free. But we need the world to know what we are fighting for, and why. We need the international community to recognize, on Chin National Day, that our people are the victims of the one of the greatest injustices, and inhumanities on Earth today, and we need our allies and partners across the world to come to our aid.

The Chin asks for nothing more than is our birthright – our freedom, our right to our own home, culture, languages, traditions, and religion. Freedom is in our blood, and it is for freedom that we have battled the Tatmadaw for so many decades. My brothers and sisters, we are now seeing the end of that fight. Our fight, not only as Chin, but as a united Myanmar people, to finally and forever throw off the yoke of military oppression is coming to a head. The military cannot slow our momentum, they cannot terrorize us into obedience or subservience. Our victory, though slow and costly, is inevitable. And when we defeat the junta who have enslaved and tortured our people for so many years, we will at last know the same freedom and independence our forefathers knew before us. We will help to build a new Myanmar “Federal Democratic Union”, with a new constitution that belongs to the people, for the people by the people.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sasa

Union Minister of the Ministry of International Cooperation
Spokesperson of the National Unity Government of Myanmar
Former Myanmar Special Envoy to the United Nations

