



Statement by European Karen Network

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European Karen Reject UN Special Envoy Power Sharing Proposal

The European Karen Network, representing thousands of Karen people in Europe forced to flee their homeland because of repression and attacks by the Burmese military, rejects any talk of power sharing with the Burmese military.

We are alarmed that in an interview with Channel News Asia, the UN Special Envoy Dr Noeleen Heyzer talked about finding ‘commonalities’ with the military, and that people in Burma should ‘negotiate what this power sharing will look like.’

These comments tell us that the UN Special Envoy is not listening to the people of Burma and has no real understanding that the military is a root cause of most problems in the country. They came on the same day as more airstrikes against civilians in Karen State.

The Burmese military faces charges of genocide at the International Court of Justice, which is a UN Court. Why does a UN Special Envoy want to try to negotiate to keep the military in power when a UN Court has decided there is enough evidence to hear a case that they broke the Genocide Convention?

"The Burmese military have been attacking the Karen people for more than 70 years. They have committed countless violations of international law against us. It is not the role of the UN Special Envoy to try to find a way to keep our oppressors in power," said Nan Kyi Aye, Chair of the European Karen Network. ***"The goal of the UN Special Envoy must be to remove the Burmese military from power immediately, not push us into keeping the military in power, with time ticking down before the next coup."***

The Burmese military was in a power sharing with NLD led government before the coup. However, the attacks against ethnic people didn't stop. For the past ten years Burma was under a military drafted constitution with guaranteed ministerial posts and twenty-five percent of the seats in Parliament. They imposed this system with no negotiations or compromise. The entire constitution and political system were entirely their own creation, and still they held another coup.

The military has shown itself time and time again to be an inherently unreformable institution. There have never been genuine reformers waiting in the wings. Each new generation of military leaders is more brutal than the last. The military are a leech sucking the life and wealth from Burma. The military cannot change its nature. It must be entirely dismantled.

Only when the entire infrastructure of the Burmese military has been dismantled can Burma truly start on a path to a genuine peace where human rights are respected.

The UN Special Envoy tries to argue that the military are in control so have to be compromised with. The military are out of control, slaughtering civilians, but they are not in control of Burma. Resistance by the people of Burma has successfully prevented the military from taking control of the country. This is why the military are committing new atrocities every day. They are desperate and afraid.

At a time when the people of Burma are sacrificing everything to try to prevent the Burmese military being in power, it is a betrayal for the UN Special Envoy to try to negotiate ways the military can stay in some form of power.

The Karen people have been trying different ways to end human rights violations against us by the Burmese military since before Burma's independence. We have tried peaceful protests, ceasefires, voting and

negotiations. Yet still today our people run in fear as the Burmese military drops bombs from jets and fires heavy artillery at us. We understand better than anyone the time it takes and the challenges in trying to end human rights violations by the Burmese military.

"If there is one lesson the international community should have learnt following the horrific events of the past year, it is that the military will never act in the best interests of the people of Burma. In every area it is the obstacle to progress," said Nant Helen Buhtoo, Co-Chair of the European Karen Network. ***"Our country will have no future until the military is only part of our past."***

The interview can be viewed here.

<https://twitter.com/MayWongCNA/status/1488184246933983232?s=20&t=mSz6Ng7CDMFPjKYcdgw4dQ>

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