



MESSAGE ON SPECIAL OCCASION OF KARENNI NEW YEAR FROM THE DESK OF DR. SASA

1 April 2022

Today, I want to send my heartfelt wishes to my Karenni brothers and sisters on their New Year Day, which falls on 1st day of Tagoo. Karenni New Year Day is celebrated with Kay Htoe Boe festival, a traditional festival held and celebrated by all tribes in Karenni state. During the celebration, a tree is cut off and carved into totem pole, painted and decorated with traditional symbols representing Karenni culture. The festival is usually followed by dance competitions, costume contests and other entertainment programs.

Just like all of Myanmar's many ethnicities, the Karenni people are also suffering from oppression and crimes committed by the military over decades, resulting in waves of refugees fleeing to border camps in Thailand. Karenni new year celebrations were not permitted in the cities until 2014 after the KNPP signed the NCA with the military. But even that tenuous peace was not to last long, and coup last year showed us. The atrocities by the military have continued and since the coup, hundreds of innocent Karenni ethnic people have been killed by the military. And recently, more and more offensive attacks and air strikes have been launched by the military in Karenni state, often targeting civilian settlements and IDP camps. Villages and cities have been destroyed, causing more people to flee to the jungles. Those who weren't able to flee were mercilessly gunned down or burned alive by the fascist army.

It is tradition in the celebration of Karenni New Year to ask for blessings of well-being, wealth, peace and prosperity in life. Instead, our Karenni people are fleeing to the jungles, their homes and livelihoods destroyed from the inhuman acts by the military. My only wish for this new year is that this will be the last year our country is under this fascist regime and all of us will be able to celebrate our new year festivities in our own ways freely. We must stay united to achieve our shared goal of a free and true federal democracy, where a better tomorrow awaits us.

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