

Joint Statement
of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management - NUG,
Karenni National Progressive Party, Karen National Union and Chin National Front on
ASEAN and UN Proposed Humanitarian Support to Burma/Myanmar



MoHADM-NUG



KNPP



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The recent ASEAN meeting held in Cambodia on the humanitarian crisis in Burma/Myanmar only produced a result that would solely channel humanitarian assistance into the hands of SAC. The SAC will weaponize humanitarian aid and allow international whitewashing of SAC's ongoing atrocities, including bombing of the IDP camps, burning down cities and villages, and preventing humanitarian support from reaching the communities in need.

ASEAN AHA Centre and UNOCHA did not consult with the National Unity Government (NUG), Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs), and the State Consultative Councils in the first place before they finalized their assessment design and planning process. We were only approached by representatives of UNOCHA to provide a "safe passage" for the planned assessment already agreed among themselves. We requested that they reconsider their non-inclusiveness approach and re-design the assessment and delivery programs. They were unwilling to consider our request and indicated that the program will continue as they had planned, without any meaningful consultation or consent of relevant parties in conflicting areas and stakeholders.

It is unacceptable to us, and the approach dangerously legitimizes SAC, which is harmful to the people of Burma/Myanmar and violate humanitarian principles. We strongly believe that the SAC will continue to use the so-called "international humanitarian support" to exclude the most needed communities they are attacking and use some of this aid to supply to their military outposts as per the agreed areas in the assessment that they have strategically selected. This approach will cause real harm on the ground. The communities that most need humanitarian assistance, are the ones being bombed by the SAC and are sadly excluded from this assessment.

It is wrong to push for something that could be promoted as one of the points of the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus. It would irretrievably undermine the entire Consensus through a process that emboldens the party committing ongoing atrocity crimes and undermines the first two points of "constructive dialogue among all parties concerned" and the "immediate cessation of violence"

We are troubled by the inclusion of the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) in this process and the exclusion of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The Myanmar Red Cross Society is reportedly being used by the SAC as part of a paramilitary force (more than simply an auxiliary part of the SAC and a military

part of the SAC). ASEAN and the UN cannot claim to comply with humanitarian principles if they work through organizations such as the MRCS and SAC in this manner. An impartial humanitarian body, such as ICRC, could have offered its services to all parties to the conflict. Their participation would provide the legal basis for the external provision of humanitarian assistance and protection during the conflict.

We have been consistently and directly advocating for impartial humanitarian assistance to be delivered effectively to the affected persons within the country, including by making concrete proposals to the UN and others. We are distraught that our pleas have been unanswered by much of the international community. We welcome all assistance that will genuinely relieve the people at this time when they most need life-saving aid. Still, we must object to this initiative that will only embolden the SAC to further commit atrocity crimes, deepening and lengthening this crisis and the horror all our people face. To be impartial, humanitarian assistance must involve all parties at the planning stage. Therefore, we reiterate our request to redesign this process appropriately.

We earlier cautioned and urged:

- I. For the emergency relief of the suffering of the people of Burma/Myanmar,
 - It is best to increase support to credible local CSO/CBOs and NGOs that are operating low profile. Provide them with resources to expand their activities using existing Informal humanitarian channels.
- II. For the long-term benefit of hundreds of thousands of displaced people,
 - Provide support to credible local and international actors already involved in humanitarian support in ethnic and liberated areas and
 - Organize 'clearance' or 'facilitation' of cross-border access.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTS TO ASEAN, the UN, AND ALL DONORS:

1. Do not continue with this ill-informed and exclusive humanitarian process that only benefits areas identified by the SAC;
2. Urgently consider redesigning the program and include ALL relevant Burma/Myanmar stakeholders in the process;
3. Consider adopting the approach of ASEAN Plus, including the UNSE and ASEAN Envoy;
4. Include ALL stakeholders in an inclusive humanitarian dialogue based on the norms and principles of International Humanitarian Law and best practices;
5. We urge OCHA and the ICRC to find alternative ways to support urgent humanitarian needs through cross-border arrangements.
6. We request the UN and ICRC to assist us in negotiations with ASEAN, India, and Thailand to establish short-term humanitarian corridors to allow emergency supplies to reach those in desperate need.
7. To ensure the delivery of humanitarian support and the non-interference by the SAC, we request third-party monitoring; and the negotiations of a humanitarian ceasefire agreement.

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