The Chin State’s Military-Political Dynamics: Challenges and Opportunities
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Introduction

The military-political dynamics in Chin State over the course of the Spring Revolution have been a mixture of challenges and opportunities. The ethnic and tribal diversity within the Chin State underscores the beauty of the region, while the coordinated resistance actions against the military junta over the past three years by armed resistance groups and political organizations across Chin State to end military dictatorship and build a federal democratic union have posed a formidable threat to the Myanmar’s military regime.

However, there remain significant disagreements among the various stakeholder groups in Chin State that oppose the military council, including armed resistance groups, political organizations, civil society organizations and others, as evidenced by the formation of the Chinland Council and Chinland government. Whether these differences will destroy the symbol of beauty and unity of the Chin State depends primarily on the choice and ability to resolve of all forces within the Chin State.

In this issue of Burma News International (BNI) - Myanmar Peace Monitor Bi-Weekly News Review, we take a look at the military-political
dynamics in the Chin State over the course of the Spring Revolution by examining the various groups in Chin State and their ambitions based on their existence.

**Understanding the Chinland Council and Chinland government**

The first Chinland Council Conference, held at the headquarters of Camp Victoria from 4 to 7 December 2023, was attended by 235 people from three clusters - the Chin National Front (CNF), Chin MPs and township and regional groups – as well as guests from home and abroad.

On the third day of the conference, 6 December, the Chinland Council Conference ratified the Chinland Constitution in the morning and established the Chinland Council in the afternoon. The Chinland Council has set three goals: to build a Chinland that guarantees the right to self-determination, to build a federal union that guarantees political and national equality, and to build a democratic system. The post-conference statement published on 7 December 2023 states that the Chinland Parliament, the Chinland Government and the Chinland Supreme Court must be formed within 60 days of the formation of the Chinland Council. ¹

According to the 2023 Chinland Constitution, the 140-member Chinland Council is to be formed with 27 MPs elected in the 2020 general election who are participating in the revolution against dictatorship, 27 representatives from the Chin National Front (CNF) and 86 representatives from township

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¹ Statement of first Chinland Council Conference (1/2023)  
https://bit.ly/42EmYBA
and regional groups. The 23-member steering committee of the Chinland Council is to be composed of three representatives from the Chin National Front, three Chin MPs and 17 representatives from township and regional groups, structuring with a chairperson, a vice chairman-1, a vice chairman-2, a secretary, a joint secretary-1, a joint secretary-2, and other council members. ²

The current Chinland Council includes 27 representatives from the Chin National Front, 15 Chin MPs, and representatives from 14 township and regional groups. The 14 township and regional groups include (1) Kalay, Kabaw, Gangaw-KKG, (2) CDF-CDM-Siyin, (3) CDF- Hualngoram (4) CDF-Hakha, (5) CDF- Thantlang, (6) CDF- Zophei, (7) CDF-Lautu, (8) CDF-Zotung, (9) CDF-Mara, (10) CDF-Daai, (11) CDF-Paletwa, (12) CDF-Tonzang, (13) CDF-Kanpetlet, and (14) CDF-Matupi, according to Salai Paul, Secretary of the Chinland Council. ³

**Background**

Looking back over the three years of the Spring Revolution against the military coup on political and military fronts, the combined strength

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² Chinland Constitution (2023), Chapter (3) https://bit.ly/49gRRyL
³ Interview with Salai Paul, Secretary of the Chinland Council on future work processes https://bit.ly/49zkwy0
and unity of all stakeholders, including the Chin National Front, elected MPs, the locally formed Chinland Defense Forces (CDFs), participants in the strike movements and the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), greatly shook the military council.

The Chin National Front (CNF) has been consistently cooperating with the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) and the National Unity Government (NUG). In addition, it was also a member of Interim Chin National Consultative Council (ICNCC) formed on 13 April 2021. In May 2021, the NUG and the CNF signed a bilateral agreement to resist the military regime and build a federal democratic system.

The CNF also played a leading role in the Chin Joint Defense Committee (CJDC), which was established on 30 September 2021 together with 17 Chinland Defense Forces. In September 2022, a coordination committee was formed between the ICNCC and the CJDC for a Chinland charter/constitution and the establishment of a Chinland government. In April 2023, the CNF withdrew from the ICNCC and in May 2023, some elected MPs within the ICNCC began talks to form a Chin state government.4 In September 2023, a pre-plenary conference for the Chinland Council was held and the Working Committee for the Chinland Council Conference (W4C) was established. Then, in December 2023, the Chinland Council Conference was held, at which the Chinland Constitution was ratified, the Chinland Council was formed and the Chinland government was established, marking a significant political change in Chin State in a short period of time.

In other words, it appears that the consolidation, leadership, and ability to cooperate among the ICNCC member groups, which were established to resist the military regime and build a Chinland that guarantees the right to self-determination as well as a federal democratic union that guarantees equality, have become questionable and need to be reassessed.

4 Statement of exhortation to Chin revolutionary groups and people of Chin State on Spring Revolution’s 3rd anniversary https://bit.ly/3SYD9qa
The Interim Chin National Consultative Council (ICNCC) issued a statement on 3 February 2024 in which it did not recognize and rejected the formation of the Chinland government formed by the Chinland Council. Some remaining Chin MPs in the ICNCC also issued a statement on 14 February opposing the formation of the Chinland Council and the Chinland government.

The Chin Brotherhood Alliance consisting of the Zomi Federal Union (ZFU), the Chin National Organization/Chin National Defense Force (CNO/CNDF) and the Chin National Council (Mindat) also rejected the formation of a Chinland government in a joint statement. According to Dr. Sui Khar, Vice chairman-3 of the CNF, spokesperson of the Chinland government and the foreign affairs minister, there is an agreement between the three Chin Brotherhood Alliance and the Chinland Council to meet and discuss in the first week of March.\(^5\)

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5 Interview with Chinland government’s spokesperson and CNF’s vice chair-3 Dr. Sui Khar https://bit.ly/3OJC3wf
“If only the political disagreements can be resolved in time, the beauty and unity of Chin State will shine even brighter.”

Review

Although the military momentum in Chin State have posed a formidable threat to the military regime over the three-year Spring Revolution, the political shifts have revealed clear differences among the various groups. It is very important that all stakeholders, who are in the same boat with the determination to end all forms of tyranny, including military dictatorship, and build a federal democratic union, should respect each other, be magnanimous and urgently find a solution through dialogue for the sake of the people of Chin State.

Currently, local Chinland defense forces control up to 80% of Chin State, which has a population of only about 500,000 across nine townships. If the political disagreements can be resolved in time, the beauty and unity of Chin State will shine even brighter. At the same time, it could become a good lesson for potential ethnic conflicts and territorial disputes in other states and regions.
Six displaced persons—three women including a pregnant woman and three children— were shot dead by the military council in Shadaw Township in Karenni (Kayah) State, eyewitnesses said.

On the evening of 4 February, the military council troops arrived at the place where the IDPs were taking shelter. Then seven people—one man, three women and three children— were taken hostage.
The commander of Battalion-249 ordered to shoot and kill three children and three women.

Three women and three children were shot dead. Only a man managed to escape.

“They got arrested together with me. They were separately arrested. Among the detainees are a pregnant woman and her children, my eldest sister’s mother-in-law and her grandchildren. The total number of detainees including me are seven. I managed to escape. Six others died,” said the man who managed to escape.

The on-the-ground reporter who went to the incident at around 9 am on 5 February said: “Among those killed are children aged under five. Three adults were also killed. When I arrived there, one of the children was still alive. But the children got severe gunshot wounds on his back. The paramedic tried to save him. But his wounds were severe. He died from severe wounds there.”

On the morning of 5 February, the group dispersed and only one man escaped, said a resident of Shadaw who was close to the escapee.

The remaining victims were shot dead by junta soldiers under the order of the commander of Battalion-249.

“Seven people were abducted. The man whose hands were tied behind his back managed to escape. The commander of Battalion-249 ordered to shoot and kill three children and three women. All the victims are the IDPs from Shadaw Township.

BNI-MPM
According to the record of the Burma News International (BNI) - Myanmar Peace Monitor (MPM), there were 97 armed clash events between the military council, People’s Defense Forces/Local Defense Forces (PDFs/LDFs) and EROs during two weeks from 31 January 2024 to 13 February 2024. Take a look at regions and states, Sagaing Region saw the highest number of armed clashes, with 27 events. According to the record of the BNI – MPM, there were 4,092 armed clash events across the country from February 2021 to 13 February 2024. As armed clash events are recorded as one event per day by township, the actual number of clashes may be higher.
According to the record of the BNI – MPM, 347 junta soldiers and 38 PDF members were killed from 31 January 2024 to 13 February 2024. The junta’s shootings killed 88 civilians in Karen State, Arakan State, Karenni (Kayah) State, Sagaing Region, Shan State, Mandalay Region, Tanintharyi Region, Kachin State, Chin State and Bago Region. One military-appointed administrator from Kalarshin model village in Natmawk Township, administrator U Nyunt Win from Patlaegyi village-tract and Pyu Saw Htee members U Than Win and U Myint Zaw were killed by the PDFs.

In addition, five civilians from Tanintharyi and Mandalay Regions were shot dead unknown armed forces. On 2 February, three children who played with an unexploded heavy shell were killed in Namhsan Township.
According to the record by the BNI - MPM, 174,700 civilians were displaced by fighting, the junta's heavy shelling and arson attacks on civilian houses in Karen State, Shan State, Sagaing Region, Bago Region, Karenni (Kayah) State and Magway Region from 31 January 2024 to 13 February 2024.

According to the record by the BNI - MPM, the total number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has reached around 2,855,499 from February 2021 to 13 February 2024.
The United States extended the declaration of a national emergency regarding Myanmar for another year. It was issued on 7 February by order of US President Joe Biden, citing an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. ¹

On 12 February, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara in Washington, D.C. and mainly discussed the Myanmar crisis.

The US Secretary of State and his Thai counterpart called on the Myanmar junta to hold talks with all stakeholders, release all those arrested arbitrarily to stop hostilities and return to the path of democratic civilian rule.

In addition, they discussed the urgent need to extend humanitarian assistance to the displaced Myanmar population, including the efforts made by Thailand and ASEAN countries to resolve the worsening Myanmar crisis.²

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¹ United States extended the declaration of a national emergency regarding Myanmar for another year. http://tinyurl.com/29slhnwa
² US Secretary of State and his Thai counterpart call on Myanmar junta to return to path of democratic civilian rule. http://tinyurl.com/25wgczxt
While receiving the Myanmar expats in Japan at the Japanese Foreign Ministry Office in Tokyo on 5 February, Japan’s Deputy Foreign Minister Komura Masahiro said that he will continue to work for the improvement of the situations by listening carefully to the voices of the people of Myanmar for the development of a democratic political system and peace in Myanmar and holding talks with stakeholders.\(^3\)

On the third anniversary of the military coup, Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres underscored the urgency of forging a path towards a democratic transition with a return to civilian rule.\(^4\)

On 5 February, the Security Council convened a private meeting to discuss the situation in Myanmar. Nine members of the Security Council issued a joint statement strongly condemning the ongoing violence harming civilians in Myanmar. Nine council members are United States, United Kingdom, France, Japan, South Korea, Ecuador, Malta, Slovenia and Switzerland.\(^5\)

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3 Japan’s Deputy Foreign Minister promises to continue listening to the public for democracy and peace in Myanmar. http://tinyurl.com/26mf98rp

4 UN Secretary-General calls for return to civilian rule in Myanmar. http://tinyurl.com/2x2bsnwg

5 Myanmar issue discussed at the UN Security Council; nine countries call for an end to attacks on civilians. http://tinyurl.com/24br4rng
Remark:

References and news sources for the 'What Happened This Week' section are from local and foreign news agencies as well as 15 media organizations of Burma News International - BNI.