



Address of KNU Chairman, General Saw Mutu Sae Poe on the 65th Anniversary of Karen Resistance Day

31 January 2014

Dear Karen people, patriotic leaders and comrades,

Today is the 65th Karen Resistance Day.

Wishing all the Karen people, patriots and comrades to be filled with joy, health and national spirit. We, the Karen people, have days and dates we need to honour throughout our history, and the Karen Resistance Day is one of the days that we honour and celebrate today. The Karen National Resistance came into being with the purpose that we, as Karen people, need to stand as a nation, to possess a blissful life, to protect our political stance, to protect our people, and at the same time, to transform the political system and the social status quo.

Dear Karen people, patriotic leaders and comrades,

Throughout the history of the Karen people, we have had problems with prejudiced oppression and suppression. Due to these reasons, we have lost some of our national identities and national characteristics. Even though our predecessors have tried their best to peacefully solve the political problems, the AFPFL (Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League) and the successive regimes, used armed violence to terminate the demands of the Karen people, rather than attempting to find peaceful solutions to the political problems. Thus, Karen National Resistance came into existence on 31st January 1949, with the purpose of protecting the freedom of the Karen people and fighting against oppression, so that we can live as a people. We remember the lives and blood of our valuable leaders, comrades, civilians, and the uncountable properties that have been lost for this Resistance. Armed-Resistance indeed is worthwhile. However we cannot stop this Resistance while we are still struggling, as we have not yet reached our goal. Even though we have to unavoidably choose armed-resistance, the Karen National Union is strongly convinced that the right and most suitable way is to peacefully find solutions to the political problems. Due to this conviction, the Karen National Union persistently demands to politically find resolution to the conflict. The successive regimes, however, neglected that demand. Other ethnic nationalities demand the same as the KNU does.

Dear Karen people, patriotic leaders and comrades,

The main goal of the Karen people is political justice. We must transform an unjust political system to a just one and change the disorganised administration. Without political justice, there can be no political stability. And without political stability, there can be no peace. We cannot reach national success unless there is peace. In order to achieve sustainable prosperity for everyone in the country, peace is vital in all aspects of life. In order to have peace, political justice, stability and prosperity in the country, it is imperative to solve the problems by political means. The Union we are living in today is a Union comprised of diverse ethnic nationalities. In other words, the Union indeed is the legacy of different ethnic nationalities. We need to mutually recognise and respect one another and live peacefully and in unity in the Union. At the same time the country's prosperity is not the responsibility of a single ethnic nationality or organisation. We have to beware that all the ethnic nationalities, political organisations and other stakeholders hold responsibility as well. Political equality, political stability and peace are main pillars of national prosperity in the country. It is vital for people to have unity, cooperation and contribute energetically.

Dear Karen people, patriotic leaders and comrades,

Today, the government led by President U Thein Sein, with the purpose of establishing peace in the Union, is calling all Ethnic Resistance Organisations to hold ceasefire and politically find solutions to the vast problems that are the causes of civil war and national poverty. This sort of mentality is indeed in line with the Ethnic Armed Organisations, and therefore, they signed ceasefire agreements one after another with the government and gathered together as Ethnic Armed Organisations, preparing the agreement to be signed as the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. Due to our experiences as Ethnic Armed Organisations we need to be prudent and cautious.

Dear Karen people, patriotic leaders and comrades,

The main purpose of the Karen National Union is political justice. In other words, the aim indeed is for ethnic equality and the rights to self-determination. Peace and national prosperity can be guaranteed only when there is ethnic equality, the right to self-determination and a Union based on a democratic political system.

Dear Karen people, patriotic leaders and comrades,

It is necessary for all ethnic nationalities and political parties to work in tandem in pursuit of establishing political justice, stability, peace and sustainable prosperity. Moreover, it is necessary to cooperate with leaders in all different sectors of the government who are willing to pursue political justice and peace in the country. Now is the time that every leader and organisation stops civil war and peacefully find solutions to the political problems, and in this way, write the history of the Karen and the Union and leave a legacy of peace and prosperity that the next generations have longed for.