

## **Statement on New Military Government & Concerns of Ethnic Nationalities**

04 Apr 2011

With the 2008 Constitution in hand, which is devoid of any guarantee for the rights of the ethnic nationalities, and after stage-managing freely the 2010 elections, which did not allow for free expression of the voters, the SPDC military dictatorship cast its military uniform and set up itself as a new government, with a civilian façade. We do not believe that this new government, under the control of the military leaders, will be able to undertake true democratic transition and ethnic reconciliation necessary for peace and stability in the country.

Since the day the election was held, we have not seen any changes in the areas of the ethnic nationalities. On the other hand, human rights violations, such as military offensives targeting the civilian populations of the ethnic nationalities, forced labor, arbitrary arrest, detention and execution of the innocents by troops of the military dictatorship, continue to exist. The increase of military activities and human rights violations in some areas is clear evidence that there is no positive change for the ethnic nationalities under the new government.

After the election, the dictatorship troops force the ethnic nationality civilian populations daily to carry for them heavy loads of food ration and ammunition and clear landmines. The troops commandeer trucks, motor cycles and bullock carts of the public and use them for transportation, security and for clearing landmines. In addition, the arrest, torture and execution of the innocents continue to occur.

Unlawful arrest, detention, torture, execution and forced labor of the innocent civilians and the use of them as human shield in the frontline by the Burma army troops are continuing under the rule of the new government. According to the international law, they are serious human rights violations and crimes against humanity. They are a concern for us as the very security of life and survivals of the ethnic nationalities are in question.

It is evident that the military dictatorship does not want change, even when the international community, the ethnic nationalities and the great majority of the people of Burma are desirous of positive change. We, the Karen National Union (KNU), call on the military dictatorship again to institute nationwide ceasefire, as a first step, withdraw its forces from the ethnic nationality areas, cease military actions targeting the civilian populations and start dialogue for the resolution of political problems by political means. This demand is the first step for the realization of wishes of the ethnic nationalities.

In closing, we earnestly call on the international communities, including the United Nations, to urge the military government cogently to stop its troops from forcing the civilian populations of the ethnic nationalities for manual labor, looting their properties and targeting the civilian population for military attack, and to institute nationwide ceasefire and take steps for the emergence of dialogue.

Supreme Headquarters