

## **Union Peace-making Work Committee and ABSDF reach four-point agreement**

Yangon, 5 Aug—The state level peace talks between delegation led by Vice-Chairman of Union Peace-making Work Committee Union Minister U Aung Min and a delegation led by Chairman of All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) Yebaw Than Khe, Vice-Chairman Yebaw Myo Win and General Secretary Yebaw Hsan Ni took place at the Myanmar Peace Centre, of No 10, Shweli Road in Kamayut Township this morning.

At the meeting, Vice-Chairman of Union Peacemaking Work Committee Union Minister U Aung Min said that since the new government took office, the President had offered peace to the national race armed groups. As a result, altogether 13 ethnic armed groups had entered ceasefire agreements with the government, and the agreement signed between the KIO and government in Myitkyina in May had brought almost conflicts to an end in Kachin State, he disclosed.

He went on to say that the peace policy of the government is not merely a ceasefire as chronic armed conflicts could not be resolved immediately. Political dialogue can be the best solution to the conflicts, and all are thus to work hard for the emergence of a political platform on which conflicts can be addressed through a roundtable discussion, he noted.

The peace process calls for a ceasefire as an initial state. This should be followed by a framework among the stakeholders, and peace talks will be held based on the framework, he said. And therefore, all are to strive for the emergence of a national accord through the peace talks, he added.

The government has the peace policy already, he said and added that the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw issued a statement that it welcomed the peacemaking efforts and would cooperate in the process. Moreover, the Tatmadaw also disclosed its cooperation in the peace process in line with the guidance of the President, he said.

The national race armed groups are also desirous of making peace through a political dialogue which is supported by the people as well as the international community. The country was now in a position to bring about a full-fledged political domain for peace. It is firmly believed that the ABSDF as a force will be able to actively participate in the peace process, development and democratization and all the parties need to be rational and pragmatic in making the peace process a success, he said. In his

conclusion, the Union minister said that the peace talks are to be regarded as the first step for cooperation in democratization rather than a dialogue between the government and ABSDF and wished all those present to push ahead with the process till reaching eternal peace.

Next, Vice-Chairman of Union Peace-making Work Committee Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw National Races Affairs and Internal Peace-making Committee U Thein Zaw, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Thet Naing Win and U Khin Yi stressed the need of all-inclusiveness in Union level peace talks, peace for development, ongoing peace process being implemented by the government with momentum, ceasefire agreements with 13 national race armed groups, progress in Kayin and Kachin States where the sound of gunfire fell silent and expressed their belief in the today's meeting that could bring better outcomes.

Next, Chairman of ABSDF Yebaw Than Khe, Vice-Chairman Yebaw Myo Win and General Secretary Yebaw Hsan Ni expressed their belief in conflict resolution through negotiation for the sake of the people, their readiness for cooperation with those who love the nation and successful implementation of internal peace and national reconciliation, their hope for the today's meeting where future plans for ensuring internal peace could be laid down and their views on requirements for peace process.

Then, both sides exchanged views on ceasefire, regional peace and stability and development in a frank manner and leaders of both sides signed agreements.

After the meeting, the Vice-Chairman of Union Peace-making Work Committee presented a peace bell, U Thein Zaw and the Union ministers, gifts to ABSDF chairman and party.

The meeting was also attended by Union Ministers U Ohn Myint and U Zeyar Aung, the advocate-general of Kayin State, the Kayin State minister for security and border affairs, senior military officers of the Commander - in-Chief (Army) Office, responsible persons of Myanmar Peace Centre, CEC members, the military affairs incharge and members of ABSDF. Also present as observers were U Zin Aung of Myanmar New Society Democratic Party, U Kaung Myat Htut of Myanmar National Congress Party, U Min Ko Naing and U Mya Aye of "88" Generation Students Group and representatives of Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPCS) and Nippon Foundation.

Next, a press conference on agreements resulting from the meeting was held. Both sides answered the queries raised by local and foreign media persons and posed for documentary photos.

At the today's state level peace talks, both sides agreed to cease fire as of 5 August, 2013 for ensuring a nationwide ceasefire and holding a political dialogue, to take measures in order not to occur conflicts and fighting between ABSDF and Tatmadaw and to allow unarmed ABSDF members to travel to other places in accord with the

law except designated area (“designated area means bases of ABSDF in the areas of national race armed groups), to open a liaison office in which arms are not allowed in Myawady which is acceptable to both sides and to continue to hold talks on places for opening of more liaison offices at the Union level meeting, to form an official delegation to hold a Union level peace talks and to begin the Union level peace talks as of 10 August, 2013. To be able to sign agreements at the today’s meeting, ABSDF accepted the invitation of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and held informal meetings with Vice-Chairman U Aung Min for three times and preparatory work committee for two times totaling five. —MNA

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