

Nationwide ceasefire a step towards holding political dialogues

Nay Pyi Taw, 22 Oct —Union Peace-making Work Committee and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) held a Union level peace talks for the third time at the Office of Kayah State Government in Loikaw, Kayah State, this morning.

Union Minister at President Office U Aung Min, Vice-Chairman of Union Peace-making Work Committee, at the meeting said that 14 of 16 ethnic armed groups had reached ceasefire agreements with the government. He added that agreements had been made with KIO which is one of the remaining two groups and plans are underway to sign a nationwide ceasefire agreement and hold political dialogues.

He highlighted the nationwide ceasefire agreement signing ceremony that will be held soon is a step towards holding political dialogues, saying that the government is striving for organizing the political dialogues inspired by all ethnic armed groups without fail.

He also stressed the need for frequent meetings with ethnic armed groups for the success of peace process through negotiations. Next, Kayah State Chief Minister U Khin Maung Oo said that the Kayah State is lagged behind in development and peace is a key to development of a certain region. He called on all stakeholders to work together for holding an inclusive political dialogue and to make all-out efforts for the success of ongoing peace process step by step as ethnic minorities living in the state are longing for peace.

Then, Union Ministers U Khin Maung Soe and U Than Htay, Commander Maj-Gen Soe Htut, Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Maung Maung Ohn and Deputy Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo spoke of the process of trust-building and peacemaking, transportation and regional development undertakings.

In his address, U Khu Yal, Vice-Chairman of KNPP, voiced that it is hard to end the more than 60-yearold armed conflicts of Myanmar and achieve a lasting peace within a short period of time. It can be witnessed that there have been delays in peace process and political dialogues in other countries due to various reasons, he added.

We were brought to a certain stage in a short time, but it is necessary to try hard for peace with patience and to take time for beginning the political dialogue so that a temporary peace brought about by ceasefire agreements will be translated into a lasting peace, he said.

Next, KNPP Chief of Staff Maj-Gen Bi Htoo acknowledged the trust both sides have established and expressed his belief that today's meeting will bring better outcomes to be able take a next step towards the political dialogue.

Then, those present held talks on formation of joint monitoring groups, opening of liaison offices and measures for resettlement of IDPs and resumption of their livelihoods.

In the evening, the vice chairman and party of the Union Peace-making Work Committee enjoyed a dinner together with the KNPP vice-chairman and delegation members.

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