

Statement of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on its trip to the Kachin State (5/2012)

The Secretary of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and two members of the Commission visited Myitkyina and Waingmaw of the Kachin State from 23 to 27 July 2012 and carried out the following tasks of the Commission:-

- Visited 16 relief camps, met with the people of the camps and expressed words of encouragement to them.
- Summoned and examined the witnesses in connection with the complaints, assumed to involve the violations of human rights in the Kachin State.
- Met with the Chief Minister and the Ministers of the Kachin State Government and exchanged views on the prevailing situation in the Kachin State.

Based on the activities and the findings of the Commission team, the following recommendations are made:-

- on studying and examination of the camps that the Commission team visited, it was found that although over one year has elapsed, the basic needs of the peoples of the camps were able to be fulfilled as before. The departments and the organizations concerned are urged to supply additional medicines required for the provision of health care for and treatment of ailments caused by seasonal changes.
- the people at the relief camps expressed that they wished to return to their villages and that land mines in the surrounding areas of the villages be cleared. To carry out mine clearance before the resettlement work is commenced, there should be cooperation among the armed groups and the relevant domestic and foreign organizations. The villagers should be educated about land mines.
- according to the statements of the witnesses made in connection with the complaints, it was found that there were certain violations of human rights of the populations of the villages by the armed groups. Therefore, it is strongly urged not to violate human rights under any circumstances and to act in accordance with human rights standards.
- according to the statements of the witnesses from the Tarlawgyi village of the Myitkyina Township, there were instances of forced recruitment of soldiers from villagers of Tarlawgyi by the KIA. It was learnt that 53 villagers of Tarlawgyi who were serving as the people's militia of the KIA have returned to the legal fold. It is urged that no armed group should engage in forced recruitment of soldiers in any area.
- it was learnt that the Tatmadaw arrested and interrogated two villagers of Tawlawgyi in early January 2012 and they were prosecuted by the authorities concerned under the existing laws. In order not to adversely affect the rights of the persons concerned, the court proceedings should be expeditiously concluded.
- the Commission does not wish to make any comment on the interrogation of the suspects by security forces for security reasons and on their prosecution in accordance with the law. However, torture during the interrogation constitutes violation of human rights and must be avoided.

The Government has received encouragement and support from within and outside the country in establishing a democratic state. Similarly, the Government has made historic accomplishments in its efforts to bring about lasting peace. Under these circumstances, concerted efforts should also be made by all to establish peace in the Kachin State in accordance with the desire of the people.

The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

Dated: 14 August 2012