

The State Administration Council's Endeavors for Peacemaking Process in Myanmar

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Abstract

The research paper aims to analyze the peace process in Myanmar during the State Administration Council (SAC) government. The research attempted to examine how the (SAC) government has endeavored to deal with ethnic armed organizations. It was used the qualitative research method with primary and secondary data. The successive Myanmar governments have tried to resolve internal conflicts in their own ways since independence. The SAC government that retained power on 1 February 2021 had also attempted to step up its efforts to bring lasting peace. On February 8, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Sen. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the chair of SAC, delivered a speech expressing the Tatmadaw's desire for a lasting, sustainable, and nationwide peace, and pledging to move forward the peace process on the basis of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signed in 2015. The SAC made a special effort to achieve lasting peace in the entire country, designating 2022 as a peace year and contacted Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement- Signatory Ethnic Armed Organizations (NCA-S EAOs), and the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement- Non-Signatory Ethnic Armed Organizations (NCA-NS EAOs). The SAC government laid down nine objectives and five-point roadmap. Seven NCA-S EAOs and three NCA-NS EAOs accepted the invitation of the government and joined to attend the peace talks. Despite the SAC government has faced with many challenges for the peacemaking efforts such as the ongoing skirmishes in Kachin, Karen, and Shan state, the government go ahead to deal with EAOs for peace. This research argues that how the SAC government has attempted for peace and the challenges it faced and the response of EAOs. Thus, in order to achieve the peace process, the government needed to generate the different options for mutual gain and both sides must eager to reach the positive peace.

Keywords: peacemaking process, myanmar, state administration council, ethnic armed organizations, nationwide ceasefire agreement

Introduction

Myanmar had faced long lasting internal conflicts since independence. As the successive Myanmar government had attempted to deal with the EAOs and to end up the internal conflicts, the State Administration Council is exerting strenuous efforts for peace. The SAC adopted five future program and the nine objectives for the political, economic and social development. Moreover, as the implementation of eternal peace is necessary for the country, the SAC has formed peace negotiation committee to continue peacemaking processes with the ethnic armed organizations

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which have signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and the remaining potential EAOs who have not signed the NCA.¹ The National Unity and Peace Restoration Coordination Committee, the Work Committee and the Coordination Committee were formed with the adoption of a five-point policy on 3 March 2021 to carry out the tasks to ensure national unity and perpetual peace. The coordination committee has met NCA signatory ethnic armed organizations 16 times, non-NCA signatory EAOs nine times, political parties seven times and the religious leaders and peace negotiators two times, totalling 34. Tatmadaw issued 20 statements for a ceasefire from 21 December 2018 to 28 February 2022.² According to the statement, the military has extended the ceasefire agreement with ethnic armed groups for 21 times from Dec 21, 2018 till Dec 31, 2022. Myanmar military extended its ceasefire agreement with ethnic armed groups until the end of 2023, according to a statement released by Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services.

After inviting the Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) for peace talks on April 22, 2022, State Administration Council (SAC) Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing then held talks with representatives of 10 EAOs. The EAOs that held talks with the SAC chairman are seven EAOs that are signatories to Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) and three non-signatory EAOs. Myanmar extends ceasefire period until end of 2023. This research tries to explain how the government had attempted to deal with EAOs and the challenges that the SAC faced for the peacemaking process. The research is conducted with qualitative research method and primary data were collected from government official documents from Ministry of Information and secondary data from internet websites, and journals.

A Brief History of the Successive Myanmar Governments' Efforts for Peace

Myanmar possesses a multiethnic, multilingual, and multicultural society. Officially, Myanmar embraces eight major ethnic groups, which the government has further divided into 135 different indigenous ethnic groups. The major ethnic groups are Kachin, Kayin, Kayah, Chin, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine and Shan. As the British had ruled Myanmar for over 100 years with its divide and rule policy, it paved the way to the outbreak of insurrections and internal conflicts as soon as she regained independence. The Myanmar successive governments have been trying to solve these long lasting conflicts. From 1962 to 1988, the Revolutionary Council (RC) and Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) government had attempted to solve the internal conflicts by holding the peace talks with ethnic armed groups three times; in 1963, 1972 and 1980 respectively. From 1989, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), a military government known later as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) pursued a new era of ceasefire agreements and negotiated ceasefire deals with a total of 40 groups prior to 2010 in different sets of unwritten

¹ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. VII, no. 317, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 27 February 2021.

² *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. VIII, no. 288, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 1 February 2022.

gentleman agreement. From 2010 to 2015, the USDP government had tried to negotiate peace deals with the EAOs in a variety of means. As the result of the government's efforts, eight EAOs signed the NCA in 2015 and the first Union Peace Conference was held on 12-16 January 2016. Under the NLD government the four sessions of peace conference had convened in August 2016, May 2017, July 2018 and August 2020 and the Union Accord with a total of 71 points had been concluded.

State Administration Council's Endeavors and Preparations for Peace: New Peace Structure and Mechanism

After retaining power on 1 February 2021, the Myanmar military, or Tatmadaw, immediately organized the committee tasked with negotiating an end to the country's raft of ethnic conflicts. The new committee comprised seven lieutenant generals led by Lt. Gen. Yar Pyae. A week later, the regime formed an interim government called the State Administration Council (SAC). The Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services issued the Statement on Ceasefire and Eternal Peace on 1 February 2021: 1)the Tatmadaw has already issued a news release on the further suspension of all military operations of the Tatmadaw except State defence and administrative measures from 1 to 28 February 2021 so as to achieve enduring eternal peace after a nationwide ceasefire and continue peace dialogue by making best of use of the extended ceasefire periods, 2)Moreover, the Peace Talks Committee of the Tatmadaw was formed with four persons led by Lt-Gen Yar Pyae as chairman on 9 November 2020 in order to continue peace talks more effectively, 3) As it is the mandatory process to achieve the eternal peace for the State, the Peace Talks Committee of the Tatmadaw has been reconstituted with following persons in order to continue the peace talks as quickly as possible with the armed organizations which have signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and the ethnic armed organizations that have yet to sign the NCA.

- (a) Lieutenant-General Yar Pyae (Chairman)
- (b) Lieutenant-General Sein Win (Member)
- (c) Lieutenant-General Ye Aung (Member)
- (d) Lieutenant-General Tin Maung Win (Member)
- (e) Lieutenant-General Min Naung (Member)
- (f) Lieutenant-General Aye Win (Member)
- (g) Lieutenant-General Aung Lin Dway (Secretary)

4. The Peace Talks Committee of the Tatmadaw is hereby tasked with continuing talks with the NCA signatories in accord with the NCA provisions to further the peace process as well as with the NCA non-signatories until they sign the agreement and eternal peace is achieved.³

³ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. VII, no. 292, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 2 February 2021.

The SAC adopted five future programs and the nine objectives for the political, economic and social development. The nine objectives composed of three political affairs, three economic affairs and three social affairs. They are

1. Political affairs

- (a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.
- (b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).
- (c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

- (a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.
- (b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.
- (c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

- (a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.
- (b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.
- (c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

The government also laid down the Five-Point Road Map. They are

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted and its mandated tasks, including the scrutiny of voter lists, shall be implemented in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken with added momentum to prevent and manage the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Actions will be taken to ensure the speedy recovery of businesses from the impact of COVID-19.
4. Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.⁴

⁴*The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 258, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 30 December 2022.

On 8 February, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Sen. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the chair of SAC, delivered a televised speech to the Myanmar public, expressing the Tatmadaw's desire for a lasting, sustainable, and nationwide peace, and pledging to move forward the peace process on the basis of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signed in 2015. To this end, the SAC subsequently formed several new peace-making committees on 17 February 2021. The National Solidarity and Peace-making Central Committee (NSPCC) was formed, comprising 17 people and chaired by General Min Aung Hlaing. The committee members include Vice Sen. Gen. Soe Win as deputy chair and other SAC members. Under the NSPCC, the National Solidarity and Peace-making Working Committee (NSPWC) was formed, comprising 33 people. The NSPWC is chaired by Vice Sen. Gen. Soe Win. The committee members include Union ministers, commanders of regional commands, and others officials. In turn, under the NSPWC, the government has formed a further National Unity and Peace Restoration Coordination Committee (NUPRCC), which consists of 14 members. The NUPRCC is chaired by General Yar Pyae and the other members include Union ministers and other high-ranking military commanders. The SAC appears to have formed the peace-making committees in a bid to immediately kick off peace talks with ethnic armed organizations (EAOs).

The State Administration Council further suspended the military operations of the Tatmadaw from 1 to 31 July 2021 except the period of committing encroachment and attacks on security and administrative machinery of the government in addition to State defence and administrative measures to enable the ethnic armed organizations to continuously hold the dialogues until the perpetual peace could be restored successfully and to smoothly undertake the peace process.⁵ The State Administration Council makes a special effort to achieve lasting peace in the entire country, designating 2022 as a peace year to end the long-running armed conflict in Myanmar. The SAC are working in various ways to achieve lasting peace in the whole country. The SAC contacted ethnic armed organizations-EAOs, which have signed the National Ceasefire Agreement-NCA and the EAOs which have not signed the agreement, hoping that all to work together for the benefit of all the people of the Union. In his televised public address on the first day of the Myanmar New Year, 17 April 2022, the leader of Myanmar's State Administration Council (SAC) Senior General Min Aung Hlaing announced his plan to designate 2022 as the year of peace. Soon afterwards, he invited the leaders of the country's EAOs for face-to-face discussions.⁶ The purported goal of those discussions is to resolve the decades-long conflict between the EAOs and the central government, so that all ethnic people could enjoy 'the essence of peace'.

The ten EAOs joined the invitation of the SAC. The seven NCA-signatory EAOs registered for the peace talks are the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA), Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), the KNU/KNLA Peace Council, New Mon State Party (NMSP), Arakan

⁵ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. VIII, no. 74, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 2 July 2021.

⁶ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX no. 2, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 18 April 2022.

Liberation Party (ALP), Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization (PNLO), and the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU). The three NCA non-signatory EAOs registered to attend the peace talks are United Wa State Army (UWSA), National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA-Mongla) and Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP).

The National Unity and Peace Restoration Central Committee held its meeting 1/2021 at the office of the State Administration Council in Nay Pyi Taw on 3 February 2021, with an address delivered by Chairman of the Central Committee Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. In his keynote address, the Senior General said it was the first meeting on the peace process after the Council had assumed the administrative duties of the State. The Central Committee, the work committee and the coordination committee were set up to carry out the peace process more extensively. As regards the peace, the Council has adopted the work programme “Emphasis will be placed on restoring eternal peace in the entire nation in line with agreements from the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible” in its five future programmes, and it has also laid down the objective “Emphasizing of restoration of eternal peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)” in its political objectives. In fact, NCA is the foundation of the design to build a Union based on the federal system and democracy, as aspired by all nationalities, through the ceasefire. All the regions and states are home to multiple national races. It can be seen that various ethnics are living in regions. According to the national census of 2014, Shan State has a population of over 5.8 million with ethnic Shan representing 35.23 per cent, Bamar 11.44 per cent, Pa-O 8.94 per cent, Palaung 7.06 per cent, Wa 6.41 per cent, Danu 4.4 per cent, Kokang 3.22 per cent, Lahu 4.05 per cent, Jingphaw 2.35 per cent and other ethnic groups 16.84 per cent. Likewise, Kachin State has a population of over 1.6 million with Bamar representing 29.2 per cent, Shan 23.6 per cent, Jingphaw 18.97 per cent, Lisu 7 per cent, Rawam 5.5 per cent, Lawwaw 3.33 per cent, Lacheik 2.89 per cent, Zaikwa 1.57 per cent and other ethnics 8 per cent. Shan State has just over 35 per cent Shan people and Kachin State just over 39 per cent Kachin people. The establishment of states based on national race has led to demands for their own states with their own names. The Senior General expressed his assumption that the emergence of a state based on a name representing all national races living inside, not a single national race, could contribute much towards national unity. So all are urged to consider and seek a solution to this matter, he said. Efforts will be made to pave ways for non-signatory EAOs to sign the NCA and it is necessary for EAOs to take the peace path.⁷ Democratic rights should be enjoyed by all national races.

At the current stages of the peace process, it is necessary to hold dialogues in four phases uninterruptedly. Informal and formal dialogues should be organized as may be necessary. To strengthen the ceasefire, it is necessary to hold bilateral talks continuously in accordance with

⁷ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. VII, no. 322, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 4 March 2021.

provisions of the NCA until formal meetings and peace conferences can be held under the NCA. In the implementation of national unity and peace, it is important to implement five guidelines, including (a) building a Union based on democracy and federalism, (b) realizing national unity and peace by adopting the democracy culture of dialogues, (c) developing strategies for national unity, (d) formulating and materializing projects for rehabilitation and development together with the implementation of the peace process, (e) conducting research into root causes of divisions in the society to prevent them. The work committee is required to develop timetables and strategies, which will be implemented by the coordination committee. The meeting of the central committee will be held occasionally as may be necessary. The work committee is required to implement matters related to development, IDPs, and the interim period included in Chapter (6) of the NCA in negotiation with relevant union ministers and chairmen of state and region administration councils. Detail negotiations are to be carried out by the coordination committee.⁸ In conclusion, the Senior General urged the committees to try to strike a balance between peace and development as they are directly proportional to each other.

The Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services released an announcement on 30 May 2021 that the Tatmadaw's military activities would be halted, and the ceasefire period extended from 1 to 30 June, except for groups committing attacks against national security and administrative machinery. June is also the period for the reopening of basic education schools all over the country and the ceasefire extension should be seen as an opportunity for the peace process. The National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee (NSPNC) and Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) held a coordination meeting on 13 May at the NSPNC's office. Committee Chairman Lieutenant-General Yar Pyae and members, and the ALP Vice-Chair (No. 3) Daw Saw Mra Razar Lin and her team attended the meeting. The Committee Secretary explained the work of peacemaking committees formed by the State Administration Council, while ALP members put forward issues related to the peace and regional development in Rakhine State. It was reported that the NSPNC would cooperate and conduct the necessary coordination and negotiations in this regard. Union Minister U Saw Tun Aung Myint of the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs met the Mro ethnic delegation led by U San Tha Aung on 12 May 2021. They held talks on the matter of the teaching of Mro language and literature in basic education schools, the appointment of teaching assistants and language teachers on a daily-wage and monthly-pay basis.⁹ Among others, the meeting also discussed the promotion of Mro literature and ethnic affairs.

NSPNC organized a discussion with the work group of political parties in Nay Pyi Taw on 6 March 2022. The meeting was attended by Member of the State Administration Council Chairman of the NSPNC Union Minister at the Government Office (1) Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and committee members

⁸ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. VII, no. 322, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 4 March 2021.

⁹ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. VIII, no.75, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 3 July, 2021.

and leader of work group of political parties' group Chairman of Shan Nationalities Democratic Party U Sai Aik Pao and other representatives. During the meeting, NSPNC Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and leader of political parties' work group U Sai Aik Pao extended greeting speeches. Then, the two sides discussed step by step implementation of work process beyond 2020 and the issues mentioned in the Table (2).¹⁰ The meeting ended with concluding remarks by leader of political parties' work group U Sai Aik Pao and NSPNC Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae.

State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 22 April invited the ethnic armed groups to peace talks to end armed conflicts across the nation. According to the invitation, a peace delegation led by RCSS/SSA Chairman U Ywad Serk arrived at Nay Pyi Taw Military Airport on 19 May 2022.¹¹ The Peace Talks Team of the government and the delegation led by the chairman of the Restoration Council of Shan State-RCSS (SSA) held discussions in Nay Pyi Taw on 21-23 May 2022. During the meeting, Peace Talks Team Leader Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and RCSS Chairman General Yawd Serk discussed peace and development related matters.¹² During the meeting, Lieutenant General Win Bo Shein, a member of the National Solidarity and Peace-making Negotiation Committee, explained the committee's findings on the agreements contained in Part 1, 2 and 3 of the Union Accord, and remaining issues to be discussed in Part 3. RCSS asked for further information.¹³ They then discussed general issues related to peace and development, and signed agreements following three days of negotiations.

Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander- in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a peace delegation led by Vice-Chairman of the National Democratic Alliance Army- NDAA (Mongla) U San Pae at the parlour of Bayintnaung Villa in Nay Pyi Taw on 4 June 2022 to talk about peace issues. The meeting was also attended by SAC Vice-Chairman Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander- in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Council members General Mya Tun Oo, Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun and Lt-Gen Yar Pyae. The Vice-Chairman of the National Democratic Alliance Army- NDAA (Mongla) was accompanied by General Secretary of the Peace and Solidarity Committee U Kyi Myint, Secretary-2 U Ah Lu and Head of Communications Division U Sai Mauk. At the meeting, the Senior General explained the situation to promote development tasks of the Union only when armed conflicts can be solved peacefully, needs to continuously develop education, health and economic sectors without stopping while peace talks are in progress, and efforts to restore perpetual peace for handing over the peaceful, modern and developed Union to the new generations, exercising the

¹⁰ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. VIII, no. 322, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 7 March 2022.

¹¹ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 34, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 20 May 2022.

¹² *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 36, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 22 May 2022.

¹³ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 37, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 23 May 2022.

multiparty democracy in conformity with the people's desires, and building the Union based on democracy and federalism.

The Vice-Chairman of the National Democratic Alliance Army-NDAA (Mongla) and party expressed their warm welcome to the offer of the Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services with generosity to implement the internal peace and development through political talks, the pledge of the NDAA (Mongla) not to secede from the State and firmly abide by non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty, and similar attitudes for exercising multiparty democracy and building the Union based on democracy and federalism. They also reported on economic, health, education and regional development measures of the local ethnic people. They then frankly discussed peace issues, education, health and regional development matters based on both sides' views.¹⁴ After the talks, the Senior General presented gifts to the Vice-Chairman of the National Democratic Alliance Army- NDAA (Mongla) and party who returned domestic gifts.

The meeting between the National Peace Talks Team and the delegations from the Pa-O National Liberation Organization-PNLO, the Lahu Democratic Union-LDU and the Arakan Liberation Party-ALP in Nay Pyi Taw on 23-27 August 2022. The State Peace Talks Team held a meeting with the peace delegation led by the chairman of the PNLO, the chairman of the LDU and the vice-chairperson of the ALP. Member of the State Administration Council and Union Minister at the Union Government Office (1) Chairman of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee, Leader of the Peace Talks Team Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Team Members: SAC member Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Lt-Gen Min Naung, the Secretary of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee and committee members: Lt-Gen Min Naing, Lt-Gen Win Bo Shein and Lt-Gen Aye Win, and Chairman Khun Thurein and Vice-Chairman Khun Tun Tin, of the Pa-O National Liberation Organization-PNLO, Lahu Democratic Union-LDU Chairman Kyar Solomon and General Secretary Kyar Ya Kok, ALP Vice-Chairperson Saw Mra Raza Lin and Member of the Central Executive Committee Khine Soe Mra attended the meeting.¹⁵ During the third-day meeting, NSPNC member Lt-Gen Win Bo Shein reported on the list of Union legislation – Table 1 and the list of regional or state legislation – Table 2 in the Constitution in respective sectors and presented the studies on the agreements of Part III of the Union Accord to check whether they comply with the existing laws and the 2008 Constitution. Then, NSPNC member Lt-Gen Min Naung clarified the phased implementations – Table 2 and post-2020 procedures to be discussed according to the ninth JICM resolution.¹⁶ Afterwards, the attendees exchanged their points of view and closed the third-day meeting.

¹⁴ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 50, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 5 June 2022.

¹⁵ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 130, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 24 August 2022.

¹⁶ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 132, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 26 August 2022

The fourth-day meeting National Peace Talks Team, peace delegation of PNLO, LDU and ALP discuss separately. According to the negotiations resulting from the four-day meetings, the opinions of both sides were discussed again and the final agreement was reached. The agreements are confirmed and signed by both parties. Afterwards, the SPTT Leader Lt-Gen Yar Pyae presented the record book on the SAC's endeavours for the benefit of the country published by the Ministry of Information, the Coalition Politics book, MRTV DTH receiver two feet satellite dish and gifts.¹⁷

The meeting between the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee-NSPNC and the working group of political parties was held on 27 August 2022. SAC Member Union Minister at the Union Government Office National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee Chairman Lt- Gen Yar Pyae and committee members, leader of the working group of political parties Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) Chairman U Sai Aik Pao and representatives of the working group attended the meeting. Each point of NSPNC's findings on proposals of the working group of political parties concerning amendment points to the 2008 Constitution was discussed throughout the meeting and participants exchanged their views. Then, the NSPNC clarified the findings on the practice of federalism in Germany and presented the lists of pending legislation from Table 1 and Table 2 provided in the 2008 Constitution.¹⁸ Afterwards, mutual views from both sides were collected and documented.

The State Peace Talks Team- SPTT conducted a discussion with the delegation of five Ethnic Armed Organizations, members of the Peace Process Steering Team-PPST on 27 December 2022. State Administration Council Member Union Minister at the Government Office Chairman of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee-NSPNC Peace Talks Team Leader Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and members — SAC Member Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun and NSPNC Secretary Lt-Gen Min Naung — and NSPNC members Lt-Gen Min Naing, Lt-Gen Win Bo Shein, Lt-Gen Aye Win and Colonel Wunna Aung attended the meeting. Moreover, the leaders of ethnic armed organizations-EAOs who participated in peace processes and NCA procedures, those who participated in NCA signing ceremonies — Patron Phyar Tan Khun Okkar from the Pa-O National Liberation Organization-PNLO, Vice-Chair Saw Mra Yazar Linn of the Arakan Liberation Party-ALP, Commander- in-Chief Saw Steel of the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army-DKBA, Vice-Chair Dr Naw Kapaw Htoo of the Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army-KNU/KNLA (Peace Council), Vice-Chair Kyar Phu of the Lahu Democratic Union-LDU and representatives of peace talks also participated in the meeting. The plans to be discussed in the peace talks were negotiated in detail and adjourned at the first meeting after participants agreed on eight plans. The second meeting was held on 28 December and the discussions continued according to the plans approved by both sides in the

¹⁷ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 133, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 27 August 2022

¹⁸ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 134, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], , 28 August 2022

peace talks.¹⁹ Attendees mutually discussed plans agreed upon at the previous meeting. The meeting was adjourned after discussing general matters. The third-day meeting was conducted on 29 December and the common agreements between both sides were signed.²⁰ At the meeting, final agreements resulting from three days of negotiations were confirmed and signed by both sides, after the re-discussion. Then, Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, and PNLO Patron Phyar Tan Khun Okkar on behalf of the participating EAOs, gave their concluding remarks and presented Sandisolar Mono 18V 5W lamps given by the Ministry of Border Affairs.²¹

The SPTT met with UWSP, NDAA and SSPP delegations on 5-7 January 2023. The second-day meeting of the State Peace Talks Team and delegations of the United Wa State Party-UWSP, the National Democratic Alliance Army-NDAA and the Shan State Progress Party- SSPP continued at the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Centre in Nay Pyi Taw on 6 January 2023. State Administration Council member Union Minister at the Government Office National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee-NSPNC Chairman State Peace Talks Team Leader Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and members — SAC Member Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, NSPNC Secretary Lt-Gen Min Naung — and NSPNC members Lt- Gen Min Naing, Lt-Gen Win Bo Shein and Lt-Gen Aye Win, and UWSP Vice-Chairman U Lau Yaku, NDAA Vice-Chairman U San Pae and SSPP Vice-Chairman- 2 Sao Khun Seng attended the meeting. Unfinished matters at the first meeting, the regional development, education, health and general matters were discussed at the second-day meeting. The third meeting was held on 7 January and the two sides discussed their views again, and the final agreements were signed and exchanged.²²

The State Peace Talks Team and the peace delegation from the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) were held on 24-26 January 2023. Following the three-day discussion and negotiation, the two sides agreed and signed the final comprehensive peace agreements.²³ Thus, the SAC has endeavored for eternal peace by means of informal and formal dialogues. To strengthen the ceasefire, it has held bilateral talks continuously in accordance with provisions of the NCA until formal meetings and peace conferences can be held under the NCA.

Challenges

In the invitation of the State Administration, the ten EAOs joined the invitation of the SAC. The seven NCA-signatory EAOs registered for the peace talks are RCSS/SSA, DKBA, the KNU/KNLA Peace Council, NMSP, ALP, PNLO, and LDU. The three NCA non-signatory EAOs registered to attend

¹⁹ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 256, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 28 December 2022.

²⁰ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 257, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 29 December 2022.

²¹ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 258, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 30 December 2022.

²² *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 266 [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 7 January 2023.

²³ *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, Vol. IX, no. 286, [Yangon: Ministry of Information], 27 January 2023.

the peace talks are UWSA, NDAA-Mongla and SSPP. At the current stages of the peace process, the SAC holds dialogues in four phases under the five guidelines. The SAC also formed three committees: NUPRCC, NSPCC and NSPWC to pursue effectively peace deal with EAOs. However, there were misunderstanding, distrust, social unrest and the fighting between the Tatmadaw and the KNU continues in Kayin State, as clashes between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army, the KIO's armed wing, continue to escalate in northern Shan State. Although the Tatmadaw and the so-called Three Brotherhood Alliance – the AA, TNLA, and MNDAA – have extended their respective unilateral ceasefires, peace talks between the Tatmadaw and the Alliance and KIO seem implausible to happen soon.

Conclusion

The SAC has endeavored for perpetual peace and ongoing peace talks and progress. Since the country regained independence, the past successive governments and the Tatmadaw have been making efforts to end the internal armed conflicts and restore peace. The State Administration Council makes a special effort to achieve lasting peace in the entire country, designating 2022 as a peace year to end the long-running armed conflict in Myanmar. The SAC are working in various ways to achieve lasting peace in the whole country. The SAC contacted ethnic armed organizations-EAOs, which have signed the National Ceasefire Agreement-NCA and the EAOs which have not signed the agreement, hoping that all to work together for the benefit of all the people of the Union. As the peace process is essential for the country, the State Administration Council formed three committees related to peace. These were the National Unity and Peace Restoration Coordination Committee led by Senior General, the Work Committee led by the Vice-Senior General and the coordination committee led by Lt-Gen Yar Pyae. As it has been expressed in the fourth point of the five-point road map, the SAC invites all relevant organizations for peace talks. At the invitation of the SAC, the ten EAOs (seven NCA-S EAOs and three NCA-NS EAOs) joined and signed the agreements. There are still many challenges for peace process although the SAC government has being attempted for peace. It can assess that the lasting peace can be expected only if both sides have strong desire to go on this process.

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