

Non-governmental organisations collectively call for immediate cessation of armed conflict and protection of civilians in Kachin and Northern Shan States, Myanmar (Yangon, 25 January 2017)

The undersigned humanitarian and development NGOs operating in Kachin and Northern Shan States in Myanmar are gravely concerned about the continually escalating armed conflict and the severely deteriorating security situation for the civilian population in Kachin and Northern Shan States.

We are alarmed about incidents of civilians being killed, injured and displaced due to intensification of military operations and use of heavy artillery in close proximity to IDP camps and populated areas. Of particular concern are the dire living conditions and the lack of access to humanitarian aid of over 6,000 displaced people from camps in Maga Yang, Zai Awng and Hkau Shau in Kachin State.

We also express our concern about the situation of the civilian population in Mansi Township, Kachin State and the evolving situation in Kutkai, Kyaukme and Nam San Townships in Northern Shan State, as the conflict intensifies, especially the additional 5,600 people that have recently been displaced due to ongoing conflict in Northern Shan State.

In the absence of a political solution to the humanitarian crisis and any imminent prospect of an inclusive peace dialogue in Kachin and Northern Shan States, the situation of those displaced communities is particularly alarming given the lack of safe locations, threats to their safety, increasing restrictions on their freedom of movement and their inability to access humanitarian aid.

We, as local, national and international organisations committed to the principles of humanity, independence, neutrality, and impartiality, urge the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and all parties to the conflict to promote, respect and facilitate the protection of civilians and access of humanitarian assistance to all those in need. We strongly encourage the international community to continue to advocate for the protection of civilians and unobstructed humanitarian access to affected populations in these areas in addition to increasing funding to meet the rapidly expanding needs of displaced people.

The undersigned NGOs request the following:

- 1) The immediate cessation of armed conflict in Kachin and Northern Shan States.
- 2) To ensure the protection and safety of the civilian population and displaced persons in areas affected by armed conflict.
- 3) To fulfil the obligations under customary International Humanitarian Law to protect civilians, civilian locations and civilian assets, and bring an immediate end to all violations of human rights by all parties to the conflict.
- 4) To ensure that basic humanitarian needs and rights of the affected civilian populations are met.
- 5) To remove all impediments and restrictions, formal or informal, to the movement of humanitarian aid including personnel, goods and services to ensure timely response to humanitarian needs.
- 6) To constructively engage in a mediated peace dialogue to achieve sustainable peace in Myanmar.

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