



## **Restoration Council of Shan State**

### **Statement on the National Political Dialogue of Shan Nationalities**

**Date: 8 January 2018**

1. In accordance with the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of the Road Map of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), the Framework for Political Dialogue (FPD) and the resolution of the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Joint Implementation and Coordination Meeting (JICM), the National Political Dialogue of Shan Nationalities will be convened at Langkhur town in Langkhur District in Shan State, organized by the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA).
2. According to the implementation process of the National Political Dialogue, it is necessary to hold (prior) public consultation meetings with all the Shan communities living in different parts of the Union of Myanmar. The public consultation meetings held inside Shan State and at some townships outside Shan State where there are Shan communities have been held with the approval of the Government and in line with the Union-level Bilateral Agreement.
3. Of the (55) townships in Shan State, the public consultation meetings had been held at (14) townships during the period from 17 to 25 December 2017. During that period, at most of the townships, the meetings had been subjected to various persecutions by members of the Tatmadaw, especially at Panglong, Tachilek, Kali and Kyawkme townships. In Panglong town, on 17 December 2017, as the people were preparing to hold the public consultation meeting, the Tatmadaw came in and blocked the meeting, fully armed with war weapons as if to seize an enemy stronghold -- an incident that has left a permanent black mark in the history of the Union. On 19 December 2017, a letter was also issued by the Tatmadaw informing not to hold any public meeting.
4. Furthermore, on 22 December 2017, the Shan State Government revoked the instructions it had issued to the Districts to permit public consultation meetings, and the programs for the remaining places like Taunggyi, Kali, Kyawkme and Mandalay had to be abandoned. It has been proposed that all the opinions obtained from the public consultation meetings as draft documents will be put together and confirmed during the last prior meeting at Taunggyi, that will be held on 7,8,9 January 2018.

After that, the official National Political Dialogue will be held at Langkhur town as scheduled.

5. In order to get permission to hold the last prior public consultation meeting at Taunggyi, the Chairman of the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) had submitted letters to the State Counselor and the Commander-in-Chief of the Tatmadaw. Furthermore, the Secretary (3) of the RCSS was sent to Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw to consult with the representatives of the Government's Peace Commission and the Tatmataw on 27-30 December 2017 respectively. However, no official responses from the State Counselor and the C-in-C of the Tatmataw have so far been received.
6. After many discussions with the Government and the Tatmataw in designating the venue for the National Political Dialogue of Shan Nationalities, RCSS/SSA had accepted Langkhur town as suggested by the Government just because the Government had also granted permission for holding prior public consultation meetings at Taunggyi, Keng Tung, Lashio and other places in advance.
7. The holding of the public consultation meeting, prior to the National Political Dialogue of Shan Nationalities, at Taunggyi, which is the Capital of Shan State, is very important in terms of historical traditions of the entire Shan Nationalities; in terms of political dignity, national equality, legitimacy of National Political Dialogues and trust building.
8. The prior public consultation meetings that had been held had been faced with various persecutions by the Tatmataw, making it impossible for the people to freely and democratically express their will and fully discuss their opinions.
9. Due to the facts mentioned above and because the Tatmataw had blocked the holding of the last prior public consultation meeting at Taunggyi, RCSS/SSA has decided to temporarily postpone the proposed National Political Dialogue of Shan Nationalities, scheduled to be held on 12-14 January 2018 at Langkhur town.

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