



Press Statement

July 15, 2026

Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union (SCEF) On the Recent Consultations with the Foreign Ministers of Thailand and the Philippines

The members of the Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union (SCEF)—the Karen National Union (KNU), the Karenni, the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), and the Chin National Front (CNF)—recently participated in the meetings at the invitation of the Government of the Philippines and hosted by the Royal Thai Government.

The meetings involving SCEF representatives were conducted separately from ASEAN's engagements with representatives of the military regime. They were independent meetings intended to exchange views on Burma's current political situation, ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus, and the conditions necessary for a credible peace and political transition process.

These consultations should not be misconstrued as constituting, or commencing, a formal political dialogue or negotiation process between SCEF and the military regime. During the meetings, the SCEF leadership reaffirmed the following common positions.

1. The Five-Point Consensus Must Move from Declaration to Implementation

ASEAN itself has acknowledged that there has been no tangible or practical progress in implementing the Five-Point Consensus. The question is therefore no longer whether the Five-Point Consensus remains relevant. The question is how ASEAN intends to ensure the implementation of it. Implementation should begin with concrete measures, including the immediate release of all political prisoners, the protection of civilians, meaningful humanitarian access, and practical mechanisms to reduce violence. Without implementation, repeated reaffirmation of the Five-Point Consensus alone will not change the realities on the ground.

2. Political Transition Is the Objective; Dialogue Is the Means

SCEF does not support dialogue for its own sake. The purpose of dialogue is to achieve a political transition that addresses the structural causes of Burma's conflict and leads to a federal democratic constitutional order. Dialogue that merely reduces violence while leaving military domination, centralized authoritarianism, and the underlying political crisis intact cannot produce sustainable peace. Political dialogue is only one component of a broader peace and political transition process. It must never become a substitute for political transition.

3. The Military Leadership Has Yet to Demonstrate the Political Will Necessary for Meaningful Dialogue

The military leadership's public invitation to dialogue does not, by itself, constitute evidence of a genuine commitment to political negotiations. Political will is demonstrated through actions. The burden of demonstrating that political will rests entirely with Min Aung Hlaing and the military leadership. That burden cannot be shifted onto the resistance or other political stakeholders. Meaningful dialogue requires confidence, and confidence requires concrete actions. These include, at a minimum:

- an immediate end to indiscriminate air strikes against civilian populations and civilian infrastructure;
- the cessation of attacks on hospitals, schools, religious buildings, and other civilian facilities;
- the immediate release of all political prisoners;
- meaningful humanitarian access to affected populations; and
- other verifiable confidence-building measures capable of demonstrating a genuine commitment to political resolution.

No party can simultaneously wage unrestricted military operations against civilians while claiming to seek meaningful political dialogue.

4. Burma's Political Reality Has Fundamentally Changed

Burma today is no longer governed exclusively from Naypyitaw. Across many parts of the country, governance is exercised by state-based and locally representative authorities that administer territory, maintain public order, deliver justice, provide essential public services, and represent the political aspirations of their respective peoples. These realities have fundamentally changed the country's political landscape. Any credible peace process must recognize and engage with these legitimate political authorities. Political arrangements built upon outdated assumptions about centralized authority cannot produce durable peace. Any premature normalization would only cement the country's current fragmented state of affairs.

5. The Environment Is Not Yet Ready for Formal Negotiations

The SCEF leadership noted ASEAN's assessment that there has been "no tangible and practical progress on the ground." The meetings reaffirmed SCEF's assessment that Burma has not yet reached the stage of formal political negotiations. The immediate task is political preparation. Burma's political stakeholders must first develop a common political understanding regarding the objectives, principles, participation, structure, sequencing, implementation, and guarantees of a nationally owned peace and political transition process. Within SCEF itself, this requires further consultation among all three pillars—including the People's Representative Pillar—so that SCEF develops a coherent collective framework before entering any future political process.

6. The Peace Process Must Remain Burma-Owned

Regional and international partners have an important role in facilitating dialogue and supporting peace. However, they do not have the mandate to determine the direction, pace, structure, or political outcomes of Burma's transition. Those decisions belong to Burma's own political stakeholders. SCEF welcomes continued engagement by Thailand, the Philippines, ASEAN, and other international partners. However, external engagement should not accelerate the process before the necessary political conditions exist, nor should it predetermine its outcomes. It must emerge through a Burma-owned, Burma-led, and Burma-prepared political process.

Conclusion

SCEF remains committed to achieving a negotiated political solution. However, negotiations are not an end in themselves. Our objective is not political normalization. Our objective is a political transition that must end military domination, address the structural causes of conflict, and establish a Federal Democratic Union founded upon equality, shared sovereignty, self-determination, democratic participation, the rule of law, respect for diversity, and civilian government. SCEF will continue working with Burma's political stakeholders and international partners to prepare the conditions necessary for such a transition.

Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union (SCEF)

Media Contact:

Neineh Plo:



Saw Nimrod:

