

Letter of Felicitation by KNU President Gen. Mutu Say Poe on 67th Anniversary of Karen National Day



**Karen National Union
Office of the Supreme Headquarters
Kawthoolei**

www.knuhq.org

February 11, 2015

Today February 11, is the 67th Anniversary of Karen National Day and it is a special and sacred day for the entire Karen nation. On this special and sacred day, I wish the whole Karen nation to be complete with all the Karen national prestige and characters, in addition to Karen national spirit and dignity.

Dear All the Karen Nationals,

The Karen people are free and possess fully all the characteristics of a nation. The Karen people's history, culture, customs, language, literature and the distinct way of livelihood show the features of a nation. As a nation, in everyday life, the Karen people want to live in accordance with their own customs and tradition and, at the same time, they want to let their own people's life to progress in peace, without worry and apprehension. However, throughout history, other peoples have made the Karen people's national characteristics, dignity and historical roots to dim and disappear, through various means of repression.

In order to live in peace, the Karen people had avoided living mixed with the other peoples and had maintained their own national characters. They tended to harbor bitterness and mistrust towards the peoples, who had dominated and oppressed them. The educated and knowledgeable Karens came to realize that oppression and domination would not end by just avoiding them. Thus emerged among the leading Karens the ideas of coexisting with the other peoples and striving for their own freedom and legitimate rights. Gradually, for the Karen people's freedom, development and prosperity, unity and cooperation among the Karens have become stronger. For that reason, in the year of 1881 the first Karen national organization known as Karen National Association was founded.

Dear All the Karen Nationals,

In order to strengthen movements of the Karen people, the All-Karen National Conference, was held from February 3 to 7, in 1947. The Karen National Union (KNU) was founded on February 5, for leading the Karen people's movement. Due to leadership of the KNU, the aim, movement and cooperation of the Karen people had become stronger. On February 11, 1948, under the leadership of the KNU, 400,000 Karen people in various villages, towns and cities staged silent demonstration, carrying placards bearing the demands:

- (1) Give Karen State, at Once;
- (2) Show Karen One Kyat Burman One Kyat, at Once;
- (3) We Don't Want Civil War;
- (4) We Don't Want Racial Strife;

- which are the Karen people's political aspirations for self-determination, freedom, equality and mutual recognition, respect and peaceful coexistence with the other peoples.

In the history of the Karen people, today is the anniversary of the day, on which the Karen people unanimously expressed their sincere aspirations for national freedom, equality and love for peace. The first Kawthoolei Conference held from November 23 to 25 in 1953, after the outbreak of Karen national resistance war, February 11 was adopted as Karen National Day. The Karen people's position and aspirations, expressed on that day remain steadfastly up to this day, in the minds of the Karen people. The mass movements to uphold the position and aspirations of the Karen people, starting from 1947, had led even to resistance war, and they are being carried on in various forms.

Dear All the Karen Nationals,

We have carried on armed struggle for more than 60 years, in order to fulfil the aspirations of our Karen people. Though armed revolution has not been the choice of the Karen people, it has been an endeavor to maintain and protect our Karen people's values and characteristics, and to gain our birth rights, by just means. As it was unavoidable, we face it with unity and courage. For a people to freely grow and progress in accordance with its own free will, armed struggle is not the only way. There are many ways and it can be done all the time. We, the Karen people, in our respective regions and roles have tried to maintain our own national values and characteristics, and have tried, according to our respective competences, to raise the standard of living of our own people.

In accordance with the political development of today, the KNU, which has been leading the political movement of the Karen people, has signed preliminary ceasefire agreement with the army of the government. The ceasefire does not mean the abandonment of the Karen people's political movement and political aspirations. It is finding answer to the root cause of the civil war by holding political discussions on our Karen people's aspirations and political stand. It is the performance to gain our Karen people's objectives and political goal, after analysis of the experiences and the various aspects of the situation. It is a performance to raise the tempo of political struggle. Just as we have faced the armed struggle together courageously, it is necessary also to participate in the political struggle with unity, courage and devotedness.

In the armed struggle, we the Karen people have participated together. Now, it is the time to endeavor for the emergence of a political field. However, it cannot still be created. We the Karen people must endeavor in cooperation with the entire people of the country, in addition to endeavoring with our fellow ethnic nationalities, for the emergence of a political field. In the political field, we need to have creativity, intelligence, attentiveness and alertness. Though we do not have to sacrifice lives, blood and sweat, if our acts of endeavor are not precise and our systems are not correct, there can be losses and harms to the entire nation. At the same time, it is necessary to endeavor and make pre-preparation with our own knowledge and competency, in order to be able to fulfil our national aspirations, and to raise the momentum of the political field.

Dear All the Karen Nationals,

We ourselves must write our own history. It is necessary to be capable to write in compliance with the developing situations, in addition to facts relating to our own situation. It is necessary to write and express consistently and factually, in accordance with the objective condition, about freedom, peace and equality and our own destiny. If we express like that on the basis of our own Karen people's objective condition, and practice for reflecting it in our daily life, that itself means writing the history desired truly by our own Karen people. In the entire history of our Karen people, there has never been an incident of the Karen people giving in to repression. At the same time, it is necessary for our Karen people to have the will to take victory, on the basis of truth and justice.

Dear All the Karen Nationals,

In conclusion, I would like to say to the entire Karen national mass that just as our Karen people on February 11, 1948 had expressed their yearning for self-determination, freedom, peace and unity, it is

necessary for them to express and maintain unanimously their being Karen, the Karen national character, value and characteristics. If we maintain and care for our being Karen, the Karen people's value and characteristics, and express and elevate them unanimously in our various roles of expertise, the Karen people's aims will be fulfilled, definitely.