

**GENERAL STATEMENT PRESENTED BY CHAM TOIK,
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MON UNITY LEAGUE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS
POPULATIONS
GENEVA, JULY 28TH, 1988**

Cham Toik
Mon Unity League

Madam chairperson, indigenous brothers & sisters and distinguished representatives,

Thank you for giving me the privilege to express my words the suffering of the Mon peoples and other forgotten peoples in Burma.

With the height of its greatness, The Monland has flourished in peace and prosperity for several years in the lower part of Burma. Its glorious history turned into a nightmare when the Burmese king invaded our land and destroyed its civilization in 1757.

After Burma, including Monland regained its independence in 1948, the civil war between the indigenous peoples and the Burman broke out because the Burman majority refused the rights of our indigenous people. Taking advantage of the unstable situation, a military clique led by Gen. Ne Win seized the power in 1962 and all nationalities and classes were denied to their basic rights to economic, social and political development.

In order to keep power for itself the same military regime, now called the State Peace & Development Council (SPDC) has systematically divided the democratic forces and ethnic indigenous peoples in Burma. Separate cease-fire agreement have been signed with the Mon and other indigenous groups, but no political solution to the nation's problems has been attempted.

After the cease fire agreement with the Mon armed forces and the military junta of Burma which had recaded in 1995, the military junta has expanded its control over our areas and depleted the natural resources of our people.

In the last year alone hundreds of thousand of people have been forcibly relocated in the Shan and Karen states, which are the homelands of two of Burma's largest indigenous population. About 700 of the local Shan indigenous peoples have been killed or shoot on sight during the last year of its relocation project and the military operation in Shan State alone.

The refusal of Burma's military regime to resolve the trouble issue of the rights of the ethnic nationalities and to allow for the development of free and democratic institutions in the country is causing the situation to worsen day by day.

Over spending of scarce resources on the military, centralization and corruption have weakened the economy and most social services have collapsed. Wide spread arrest, torture, disappearance, forced labour and portering, and the relocation of whole townships and villages in urban and the indigenous areas continue and there is no end of sight. Freedom of expression and opinion do not exist. Hundreds of thousands of all indigenous peoples have fled to the borders as well as neighbouring countries and living there as displaced persons, refugees or illegal immigrants.

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Madam chairperson, in view of these circumstances and aware of the world wide movement for the rights of the indigenous populations, the Mon Unity League urges the international community to join with all indigenous peoples of Burma on this occasion in the following programs of action;

The immediate summoning of a tripartite dialogue comprised of the indigenous peoples, the democratic forces led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the representatives of the military junta (SPDC).

An immediate withdrawal of the military regime from the homelands of the indigenous peoples and a stop to the practices of forced labour, forced relocation and portering .

Access by the United Nations and international human rights observers to all detention centres and areas of the indigenous peoples.

A boycott of all companies doing business with Burma's military regime and a stop to the building of the gas pipeline in Monland.

Thank you