

# Developing Strategies to Resolve the Myanmar Civil War

## I. Statement of the Problem

1. The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and its military, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), have been fighting with the government of Myanmar for over fifty years for the autonomy promised to the Kachin<sup>[1]</sup> and other ethnic groups in the Panglong Agreement signed in 1947.<sup>[2]</sup> Fighting has intensified as the Myanmar military has started using weapons such as helicopter gunships.<sup>[1]</sup> The KIA has reacted to the fighting by planting land mines and destroying bridges.<sup>[3]</sup>
2. The fighting has relocated over 100,000 Kachin<sup>[4]</sup> and killed even more. Around 20,000 people live in Laiza, the capital of the KIO and KIA. Their safety is threatened everyday and citizens are often relocated to camps and temporary homes.<sup>[3]</sup>
3. The United Nations Special Rapporteur expressed his concern for the Kachin because of Myanmar's violations of human rights through "...attacks against civilian populations, extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention..."<sup>[5]</sup>
4. The civil war is threatening economic and political changes set in place by Thein Sein, the president of Myanmar. The president has been encouraging ceasefires, but none have been agreed upon by the Kachin.<sup>[1]</sup> If the United Nations does not step in, peace and cooperation will not be possible. Involvement of the United Nations would include Security Council, as it is their responsibility to maintain peace and safety internationally.<sup>[6]</sup>
5. All countries play a part in this conflict. Some countries such as Australia<sup>[7]</sup> and Japan aid the Myanmar military indirectly by providing the country with millions of dollars, while others side with the Kachin and have programs to help the refugees.<sup>[8]</sup> All countries in Security Council should be especially concerned with this conflict due to the suspected human rights violations by the Myanmar government.<sup>[5]</sup> China's support is imperative in any plan towards peace because the country holds numerous Kachin refugees and fighting often crosses over the border into their land.<sup>[1]</sup>

## II. History of the Problem

6. During World War II, nationalist Aung San traveled to Japan to train and participate in their military after they offered to free Myanmar if military service was provided, yet the Japanese did not keep their agreement. Aung San then fought for the British military who also promised Myanmar their freedom after a series of negotiations. <sup>[9]</sup>

7. Aung San and members of Burma's Executive Council <sup>[10]</sup> wrote the Panglong Agreement in 1947. The agreement promised that "Citizens of the Frontier Areas shall enjoy rights and privileges which are regarded as fundamental in democratic countries." Members from Myanmar and Kachin areas signed this agreement. <sup>[11]</sup>

8. A few months after making an agreement with the British for Myanmar's independence, Aung San was assassinated by a group of political rivals <sup>[10]</sup> U Nu replaced Aung San's role as government leader and head of Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League. <sup>[12]</sup> Less than a year later, Myanmar was granted independence from Britain. <sup>[9]</sup>

9. Since mid 20th century, the KIA has been fighting the Myanmar government because they have not been given the rights agreed upon in the Panglong Agreement. After a seventeen year pause in fighting, attacks aimed at the Myanmar government started in July 2011 because the the Kachin were withheld from participating in an election in November 2010. <sup>[3]</sup>

10. Many programs and organizations have played a role in this issue. For example, the Myanmar Peace Center was created by the Burma News International to assist in peacekeeping by collecting information and aiding in communication of conflicts. Their vision is to play "a key role in the development of a peaceful nation inclusive of Myanmar's ethnic diversity." <sup>[13]</sup> During times of less violence, United Nations groups such as UNICEF and WFP have brought tools and resources such as cooking utensils, mosquito nets, and blankets to help about 2,000 Kachin. <sup>[14]</sup> Another program, the Global Fund, backed out on their promise to spend 98.4 million dollars on aiding in Myanmar's health care. It is speculated that the United States pressured the Global

Fund into leaving the agreement, yet the Global Fund claimed that they had to leave Myanmar due to bad conditions in the country. <sup>[15]</sup>

### **III. Potential Solutions**

11. The topic of Myanmar's ethnic conflicts is complex and contains multiple facets, but delegates should try to remain focused on creating a solution protecting the Kachin's rights without harming Myanmar's government policies. Delegates should remember that this committee has the right to veto resolutions and take direct action. When creating a solution, it is imperative to think:

- Will the solution take advantage of any programs or organizations dedicated to this conflict?
- Is it important to take action on Myanmar's human rights violations?
- Will this solution provide aid for Kachin refugees?

### **IV. Position and Research Tips**

12. This is an extremely current topic, so it would behoove delegates to keep up to date with decisions being made between the KIO and Myanmar government until the conference. All countries play a role either indirectly or directly to this conflict and are important in providing support to end the issue. International involvement besides the United Nations is also a large factor especially with European Union. When researching, please only use veritable and verifiable resources and consider the following:

- Has your country provided aid to the KIA or Myanmar government?
- Is your country directly influenced by changes in the outcome of this conflict (trade, industry, etc.)?
- Does your country believe the Myanmar government is violating human rights in their war with the Kachin? If so, should Myanmar be prosecuted? How?

Useful Web Sources

- <<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/rolesc.shtml>>
- <<http://www.freekachin.org/>>
- <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12990563>>
- <<http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/women-violence-and-burma-reporting-frontlines-kachin-state>>
- <<http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/23/world/asia/myanmar-burma-kachin-conflict>>

## V. Notes to Delegates

Hello delegates! I would like to welcome you all to Security Council at MUNSA XVIII. I hope you are all just as excited as me to discuss this year's topics and pass some amazing resolutions. If you have any concerns or questions about Security Council or this topic, please feel free to email me at [ewoods1069@stu.neisd.net](mailto:ewoods1069@stu.neisd.net). Be prepared for three great days of MUNSA as this will be the greatest conference yet!

-Emily Woods

## References

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