



South-East Consultations
Shangri-La Hotel
19 May 2014

I. Peace Process (International Crisis Group)

- Positive meetings between government and armed groups in early March and April. Tatmadaw more directly engaged, and at a senior level, explaining its position in a way that had not been done before.
- Agreement on a single draft text of a nationwide ceasefire document, which is symbolically important despite a great deal of bracketed text. The Tatmadaw essentially sees 1 August 2014 as deadline, which it has linked to the retirement of the Commander-in-Chief (possibly in early 2015), and any closer to 2015 and the current government has less time remaining to produce anything meaningful. The consequences of missing the deadline are ominous for the armed groups, but have given impetus to the process. Optimism has dissipated in May 2014 due to level of difficulty of issues required to finalize an agreement before this deadline. Not yet and contingency plan in case text cannot be agreed. Meeting on 21 May 2014 is critical.
- Another source of concern is the clashes in Kachin and Northern Shan, and what this will mean for national level talks. The Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) has attempted to de-escalate through talks last week, which were positive although no high-level officers represented the Tatmadaw (most senior was the regional commander). Agreement drawn up in principle on establishing a 'conflict mediation team', with talks ongoing on the modalities.
- On the issue of a federal army, the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) established an office of Federal Army a couple months ago, although it was unreported. Not militarily significant but symbolically important. This is particularly so since there are different interpretations of what is meant by "federal army" in the ceasefire negotiations. One interpretation is that the composition of the Tatmadaw should reflect the ethnic diversity of the nation. Another is that each state has its own military (although this is clearly a non-starter). The establishment of this office is unlikely to be interpreted positively by the Tatmadaw.

II. UN Peacebuilding Fund

- Funds received from UN HQ in New York and allocated for the South-East. Mission undertaken by the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and participating agencies. CTFRM (underage recruitment) funding has been received for delisting, while Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC) funding is pending for mine action.
- Mission to South-East (Kayin and Mon State) undertaken this month, involving UNDP, UNW, IOM, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNHCR. MPC also joined with two colleagues. Mission met with the Chief Minister in Kayin State, and with cabinet ministers in Mon State.
- The 1.6M for the South-East (a total of 2.4M given to each agency for 18 months) is highly symbolic, with all UN agencies in the same programme. Guidance taken from NSAs, and mindful of different brigades within NSAs such as the KNU. Takes into account advice to be hands-on with them. Conflict sensitivity is very important. Advice also taken from CBOs which was well received.
- Projects include: a) Building a responsive state – strengthening social services in ethnic minority areas with state and NSAs (UNICEF); 2) Supporting civil registration and building capacity for durable solutions (UNHCR); 3) Empowering women and youth and peacebuilding (UNW, UNHCR, IOM); 4) Local media strengthening and ethical reporting (UNESCO and UNDP); 5) SGBV and women's involvement in the peace process (UNHCR, UNW).

III. Census in the South-East (UNFPA)

- Overview provided of the process, including on mapping, planning and logistics. Involved significant consultation with state and NSAs in the South-East.
- No major problems reported in the SE. Enumerators – mostly local teachers – carried out their tasks with no issues, no household refusals, strong presence of community leaders and overall commitment levels and community spirit. Language was an issue at times, notably in Kayah/Karenni State.
- Scanning will be completed in October 2014. Preliminary results in August 2014, with main results 12 months after data collection. Framework for household survey in August 2014. Thematic reports from November 2015 to December 2016.
- Consultations ongoing about data analysis, release and dissemination sensitivities. Question of how to bring the right stakeholders together, giving equal rights over the data. There were rumours in the refugee camps that people would return to get national registration cards to be counted, but no evidence to show this took place.

IV. Operations Updates

- UNHCR opened its office in Hpa-An at the end of February, and moved its internal UNHCR field coordination hub to Hpa-An in April.
- Return assessment project has been going on for 12 months now. 176 assessments completed; 45 verified return villages. Rate of spontaneous returns remains low, on par

with TBC estimates of returns. UNHCR focus is on permanent return; unable to capture long-term visits/ non-permanent return/ family visits at this time. [Return Assessments Dashboard circulated prior to SE Consultations]

- Pilot projects – remain very much in a discussion stage at this point or have been dropped. Only a couple are in early stages in Kayin State, but still unclear who is benefiting and who is targeted.
- Dialogue starting between refugee representatives and state-level governments. Three visits have been completed to Kayin State to meet with the Chief Minister. Groups notably male-dominated. Plan for similar meeting in Kayah but progress needed. [UNHCR Cross-border Bulletin circulated prior to the SE Consultations]
- Action Aid has launched a large participatory bottom-up planning training in Kayah across all townships in May.
- Kayin State government held its first coordination meeting recently. A very positive step, all agencies briefed on their activities. Only included international organizations and NGOs; local CBOs were absent.

V. Preparedness for Durable Solutions

- UNHCR had convened several meetings last year on durable solutions and the state of knowledge about refugees, IDPs and migrants.
- Return movement of refugees is not large at present and the number of potential returns is small. A profiling of the refugee population commissioned by UNHCR Thailand is almost complete. Preliminary results show most people don't want to go back, although this reflects primarily their willingness to commit at this time.
- IDPs – Ongoing question about what agencies on the ground know about location, number and conditions of IDPs. UNHCR held a series of workshops with local organizations earlier in the year in the regions and the answer is not a lot, and it is possible we may never have a clearer picture. It is evident that people have moved many times and it can be difficult to differentiate the needs of IDPs from the general population. A major consideration for organizations thinking about IDP programming.
- A background paper synthesizing available information and the outcome of these workshops and previous meetings was shared on 16 May 2014. Partners are requested to provide feedback to the analysis. In short, our approach to framing durable solutions support should be modest, considering scope of problem – estimated that less than 5% of the population in the South-East is displaced. Durable solutions strategy should therefore feed into wider transitions strategy. UNHCR will convene further thematic meetings on durable solutions before end July.
- JIPS undertook a profiling exercise in 2013 and its mission report is also available. JIPS was asked to return for further profiling in Kayah and Tanintharyi, but were unavailable as other crises (eg. South Sudan) were given priority.

VI. 3W (MIMU)

- MIMU currently lists 104 partners in South-East. Updated maps and reports have been distributed, and MIMU asked for feedback.
- Village data set was updated with new GPS data. Training on GPS can be provided. Submission forms will be distributed for further information.

VII. AOB

- UNHCR has organized an operations meeting on “convergence” on 19 June 2014 at Sule Shangri-la Hotel from 09.30. Will focus on the convergence of service delivery by state and non-state actors in the South-East context. Issue has been discussed in other meetings and merits a distinct in-depth discussion. Agencies should RSVP if planning to participate as numbers will be limited to 45 people. [Invitation was circulated prior to SE Consultations]
- EU Socio-Economic Analysis Report can be found on www.commonservice.info web portal if people have not received yet by e-mail. [Reports were circulated prior to SE Consultations]
- WFP has opened an office in Mawlamyine. Priority in NSA controlled areas will be school feeding, asset graduation and emergency preparedness. Call for any organizations interested in partnering to get in touch with WFP.
- The next South-East Consultations Meeting is tentatively scheduled for 22 July 2014, before the holiday season, subject to need. Agencies are requested to provide items for the agenda.

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