



South-East Consultations Meeting
Sedona Hotel
12 November 2013

I. Introductions

The meeting was opened and chaired by Mr. Ayaki Ito, UNHCR Acting Representative in Yangon, Myanmar. Mr. Hans ten Feld, who chaired previous South-East Consultations, has finished his assignment in Myanmar.

II. Update on the peace process and JPNA (Richard Horsey)

- Regarding latest developments in the peace process, there have been two meetings in late-October/early-November 2013, first in Laiza (among armed groups) and second in Myitkyina (between armed groups and the government). The meetings did not yield signed agreements, or consensus on a nationwide ceasefire text, but a joint press release was published in the New Light of Myanmar.
- Key point about Laiza is that it's the first time the leadership of the various armed groups come together to discuss. This is particularly significant as it was held within Myanmar, and the representatives travelled within the country to attend the meetings. The President also sent a message of encouragement.
- Almost all the main armed groups were present, although the United Wa State Party (UWSP) and the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) were absent. The Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) chaired the Laiza meeting. There were some differences of opinion, but it's clear the views are converging not diverging, and there was no indication any group would drop out of the process.
- Refugees and IDPs have featured somewhat in the discussions, but these issues were not included in the public accounts of the meetings.
- The Shan State Army – South (SSA-S) was active in the meetings, but was not in a position to sign the final note in Laiza.
- Going forward, the plan is for follow-up meetings in Hpa-An in December. The government and the armed groups will meet separately to modify the language of the proposed nationwide ceasefire, which appears delayed until 2014.

- For the JPNA, essential it does not get ahead of peace process. The government has reaffirmed its commitment; sees it as essential to the peace process. Most of the discussions currently about the technical components, and technical experts are in Yangon to examine methodologies.
- MPSI notes that the JPNA requires great sensitivity, particularly as you reconcile the mechanics and the principles of the process. A major issue is the mainstreaming of assistance to the armed groups. Comes back to the point of ensuring the political process leads rather than follows the supporting work.

III. Moe Pwint Operation (NRC)

- As an update for the ID Card Project, an LOA was signed with the Ministry of Immigration and Population in May 2013, which covers all Townships in Tanintharyi Region, and Kayin and Kayah States, four Townships in Mon State, and three townships and two sub-townships in Shan State. The launch in East Bago is awaiting approval for commencement.
- So far, 93,276 new ID cards have been issued; 14,364 renewed. These are the pink ID cards; are not supporting the green and blue cards.
- Expansion into South-East Shan State is possible, but no confirmation yet. 100,000 IDPs identified as needing ID cards. The government Minister will meet with the UWSP and SSA – South before proceeding.
- The ID cards do establish a link between the people and the state, which is significant. Support from the NSAs has been important to the project, and helped to foster wide acceptance. For example, Col. Saw Pa Do Commander of KNU in Hlaingbwe attended the launch on June 12th, 2012, and non-state actors have cooperated with the distribution of ID cards.
- NRC's objective is to allow people to access their rights and available services. With a CoC card, you can circulate freely, graduate from High School, stand for office, vote, buy land, open a bank account, etc.
- Village authorities generally request inclusion in the programme by fax, and this is then shared with the Immigration Department, who clears it with the relevant armed group if necessary. The New Mon State Party (NMSP), Karen National Union (KNU) and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army have all cooperated with the delivery of the programme in their areas. Through the ceasefire liaison offices supported by MPSI, the project is able to organize missions to access affected areas, without any security concerns so far. Very positive experience demonstrating benefits of engaging with NSAs.

IV. Early Recovery in the South-East (UNDP)

- Early Recovery (ER) is very context specific and ER programming largely depends on the needs on the ground and the crisis. Although ER is largely seen as livelihoods in

Myanmar, the main thrust of ER is on building national capacities to create an enabling environment for longer term recovery process. In the South-East, the key will be governance capacity in terms of planning and coordination in the overall recovery of ceasefire areas, as well as preparing the ground for return and reintegration, and meeting recovery of people in ceasefire areas.

- UNDP in the South-East is looking at Kayin, Kayah and Mon, having re-launched offices there. Working in 120 villages, targeting conflict-affected persons. Major work will include community mobilization, implementation of poverty score cards and livelihood assistance. For 2014, reflecting upon how to better target early recovery work, particularly considering needs of affected populations and the findings emerging from the JPNA. Implementation modality will be through implementing partners as in 2013.
- UNDP not yet working in NSA areas in the SE. One participant commented that it is important to clarify that UNDP's scope is limited in this way, as it means their engagement with IDPs and refugee returnees is quite limited.
- In the discussion that followed, it was asserted that there is no humanitarian imperative in the IDP areas. Does not mean there are not humanitarian needs, but they are not rapidly changing and necessitating immediate intervention, as these communities have relied upon their own coping mechanisms for years. Sudden humanitarian interventions could harm the broader peacebuilding efforts, hence the argument for focusing on the JPNA as the core instrument.
- The same participants asserted that the priority should be maintaining and building upon the ceasefires. When asked, communities articulate that the biggest change is that the Tatmadaw no longer harass local communities, which opens up freedom of movement and allows individuals to access available services, regardless of who controls the territory. Moreover, the economic progress has yielded tangible benefits as well, as arbitrary taxation is disappearing and access to land is easier.
- Comes down to the importance of the JPNA, particularly the joint nature employed, and its consideration for the peacebuilding process. Many of these interventions are already employing similar methodologies, should capitalize on the JPNA's legitimacy.
- Like many other agencies, UNHCR functions through an LOU with the government, which often entails government accompaniment on missions. It is important that agencies are aware of the impact that this has on how they are perceived, and take active steps to project their neutrality. This requires sound local analysis, and political engagement with the non-state stakeholders. Working through the NSA Liaison Offices has also helped. For UNHCR, it is crucial to do strong outreach and not simply stand back and wait for access, because cannot project our impartiality and neutrality if we only work in government areas. For example, during UNHCR's response to the floods in Kayin in August, more than one third of the villages covered were located in areas under the influence/control of NSAs.
- It was pointed out in the discussion that UN agencies have certain impediments to working in NSA territories which NGOs do not have. Requires reflection and study; may

be due to poor mapping of political/government systems in the country. Some agencies have had much more success (ie. access) in the past than others.

V. Coordination in the South-East: briefing on joint mission (RCO)

A joint mission was undertaken to Mon and Kayin States in October 2013, led by the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), with UNHCR, OCHA and UNDP. Focused on durable solutions. Meetings were held with the state government, international and local NGOs and UN agencies, but did not include field visits or meetings with NSAs.

- Broad agreement that overall situation somewhere between early recovery and development, and not a broadly-defined humanitarian situation, although some pockets do fit the criteria. Also does not preclude the notion of a humanitarian situation (for example, during flooding).
- During the meeting the Chief Minister in Kayin, the team was informed that the State Government would convene a coordination meeting with agencies at the end of October / beginning of November, however this has not yet taken place. UNHCR is following up on this at state level.

VI. Cross-border work (UNHCR)

- UNHCR presented the Information Management Common Service (IMCS), which is led by UNHCR Mae Sot and the CCSDPT. As part of this service, UNHCR has established a cross-border web portal. This is effectively a central online library which is available to all stakeholders, and particularly targets refugees, to enable them to make informed decisions on return. The web portal can be accessed at commonservice.info, in English, Myanmar and Karen. Donor, NGOs and humanitarian/peacebuilding/development agencies are invited to provide information on their activities aimed at refugees for posting on the portal.
- MIMU notes that while the targeting of refugees is clear and beneficial, the apparent targeting of partners means some duplication. Particularly unclear who is targeted with the 3W Matrix; may require simplification and contextualization if being packaged for refugee readers. The new MIMU website is also being redesigned to include Myanmar language, and will go online soon.
- UNHCR has taken steps throughout 2013 to expand collaboration between the UNHCR Myanmar and UNHCR Thailand operations. The most recent cross-border meeting, held in September, also included some NGOs partners, and the first Voluntary Repatriation Coordination Group will meet later this month. This is a platform with donors, agencies and refugee representatives which will ensure coordination and preparedness for a possible future Voluntary Repatriation operation.
- In an effort to analyze the mood surrounding possible returns, UNHCR Thailand is doing a survey on out of camp movements. UNHCR Myanmar has also initiated a return assessment project to better understand the dynamics of IDP and refugee returns in the

South-East. For now, not seeing many definitive returns but more extended go-and-see visits. The project aims to capture trends over time.

- Finally, UNHCR held a recent seminar to discuss the lessons learned from experiences of return/reintegration in the context of previous ceasefire agreements. Kim Jolliffe was commissioned to do research, while Ashley South provided additional commentary. Kim's paper will be published by UNHCR, and continued engagement with these issues is planned.

VII. Durable solutions training (UNHCR)

- As per the LOU between UNHCR and the government, the office is tasked with improving capacity of government and NSAs with their understanding of refugee issues. Durable Solutions Trainings already done in Kayah, Mon and Tanintharyi, with another planned for Kayin. In Mon State, the NSAs and government, at their request, attended jointly, whereas the others were separate.
- The training covers concepts and international standards, including human rights, although the focus is on planning for return. For many these basic concepts, including neutrality of humanitarian organizations, were completely new.
- A one-day session on durable solutions, open to all agencies, is planned for Friday, 15 November 2013, in Yangon.

VIII. AOB

- MPSI offered to do a presentation in the next meeting, focusing on the role/RORs of the liaison offices.
- The next meeting of the SE Consultation may be in mid-December. Original plan was for mid-January, but will consider whether we can do it sooner.
- There is a Kayah Meeting on the 22 November 2013. Information about the venue will be circulated.
- Could also have an operations meeting with agencies on the ground to go into detail about implementation. Also some interest in a Tanintharyi-specific meeting, and this will most likely be scheduled in the New Year.

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