

KIO delegates to NC welcomed home

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KNG



Five Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) delegates back from attending the Burmese military junta's final round of the National Convention (NC) were welcomed home at a special ceremony on Tuesday in Laiza controlled areas on the Sino-Burma border in Kachin State, Northern Burma. Soon after their return senior KIO officials went into a huddle to formulate their next step towards achieving autonomy for the state.

The (KIO) delegates led by Dr. Manam Tu Ja had resubmitted a special 19-point charter of demands at the final session of the Nyaung Napyin NC held between July 18 and September 3 in Rangoon, former capital of Burma. However the KIO proposal was studiously ignored by the junta, KIO sources said.

The KIO has demanded autonomy for Kachin State including administrative, legislative and judiciary powers as a state government in its 19-point charter on behalf of Kachins. The charter includes the opinions of religious, political, cultural leaders and civilians of Kachin State, according to senior KIO officials.

"Just as we tried for a political dialogue during the civil war in the 1980s, we would like to resolve the problems on the basis of a dialogue. If we cannot sit across the table with the junta representatives, we will send mediators," a KIO central committee member told KNG today.

"The KIO may conduct a series of people's conference on the current political problems between the KIO and the ruling junta. The KIO will then decide whether it will surrender its weapons or fight the junta again. It will depend on the Kachin people," he added.

At the moment a series of meetings of KIO's senior officials are underway in Laiza controlled areas after the KIO delegates returned from the Rangoon NC on Tuesday, according to KIO sources.

The KIO started attending the National Convention in 2004 after the junta's first convention in 1993 was aborted in 1996 when Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) delegates walked out in protest. However the KIO's proposal has never been discussed at the convention, KIO officials said.

The KIO is the main political front of Kachins and it signed a ceasefire agreement with Burma's ruling junta in January 24, 1994.

The KIO was formed on February 5, 1961 for an independent Kachin State but the stand was changed into autonomy for the state in 1976 after Maran Brang Seng became the chairman of the organization.

About the author: The Kachin News Group (KNG) is a non-profit, an independent media organization and covering Kachins from Burma.

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