

**Joint Statement of  
Chin Communities and Organizations  
Across the Globe  
Issued on the 59<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Chin National Day  
20<sup>th</sup>. February 2007**

Today, the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2007 is the 59<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the auspicious Chin National Day. In Chinland, in the Union of Burma, in neighboring countries and all over the world, the Chin people will celebrate our National Day.

Still, it is saddening to realize that the military regime in Burma employs all its clout to hinder the Chin from celebrating their National Day. We, the Chin people from all over the world, strongly condemn Burma's military regime for their racist and discriminatory acts.

The Chins understand that the military regime's acts of vandalizing Christian Crosses from the Chin landmarks and replacing them with Buddhist shrines is a means of tyranny and a symbol of colonialism. Thus, we, the Chin people from all over the world, strongly condemn these dictatorial acts.

Chin National Day is a historically important day of the Chin people and Chinland. This day signifies the undeniable truth that the Chin are one of the world's listed people having definite territory geographically, their own distinct and unique history, culture, literature and language. They are a people recognized by the world as deserving national self-determination. In fact, their rights are enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The Union of Burma consists of various different nations which were historically independent territories. The Burmans had their own kingdom. The Mon and Arakanese, likewise had their own independent kingdoms. The Shan, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karrenni among others also had their Princely States and Chieftdoms.

The British colonialists occupied the land of the Burmans after three wars and in 1885 the last Burman Kingdom, Mandalay, fell under the British. Chinland was separately colonized by the British after many wars and horrendous battles. Though part of Chinland was occupied by the British in 1890 the whole Chinland practically became part of the British Empire only in 1895, ten years after Burma was annexed.

The struggle for independence from the British was waged by each nationality separately. When General Aung San, the Burman leader, organized for all nationalities to have independence and to form a new Union, the Shan, Kachin and Chin leaders agreed and signed the Panglong Agreement on 12<sup>th</sup>. February 1947. On 4<sup>th</sup>. January 1948 a new nation known as the Union of Burma emerged and the Chin territory become one of the founding Member States of the newly formed Union.

At the dawn of independence and the creation of the Union, five thousands representatives from all over Chinland gathered at a conference held at Falam, the then capital of Chinland. For two days from February 18-20, 1948, they discussed their future political destiny. During the conference, an overwhelming majority voted to abolish the aged old aristocratic hereditary system in Chinland and to introduce a democratic system. The conference was the largest meeting held after independence and historically marked the Chin's desire for democracy.

The resolutions adopted at the Conference were a landmark in the history of the Chin people and in order to commemorate this important event, Chin National Day is celebrated by all Chin on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February. After the establishment of the Union of Burma, the Chin people slowly lost their right to self-determination and equal rights. The letter and spirit of the Panglong Agreement were not actualized.

To take that further, forty years of oppression under military dictatorship, all citizens of the Union of Burma have totally lost their human rights as well as their dignities as human beings. The culture and literature of the ethnic nationalities are systematically destroyed. They are now facing extinction.

Furthermore, their traditional homeland territories were confiscated and divided by the military regime. Forced relocations and forced labor are systematically executed, forcing many to leave their ancestral homelands permanently. Freedom and democracy loving Chin people have no choice and mass exodus of the Chin to countries all over the world became a new phenomena.

More alarming is the fact that the military regime has ceased to recognize those who migrated to foreign countries and their descendents the right to citizenship in the Union of Burma. The Chin in exile now lose their rights as the indigenous people of the Union. We strongly condemn the military regime for their overt attempt to strip the Chin people of their ancestral homeland.

Despite being naturalized by their host countries, the Chin Diaspora and their descendents have the right to be Chin! Even though the Chin are dispersed throughout the world, they form local communities and societies to maintain and uplift their community spirit, their culture and literature and their inalienable national identity.

Moreover the Chin are actively participating in the struggle for the rights to self-determination, the restoration of democracy and human rights and for the establishment of a true Federal Union of Burma. Their contributions towards attaining the "second Independence" for the Union of Burma are significant. No matter how long the struggle may take, the Chin are determined to pass down the historic struggle from generation to generation.

Such being the fact, we, the Chin all over the world, solemnly declare on this auspicious Chin National Day - the 20<sup>th</sup>. February 2007 that:-

- 1. The Chin of the Union of Burma have, as a people, the right to self-determination enshrined in the United Nations Charter;**
- 2. The Chin of the Union of Burma, regardless of their generation or birthplace or citizenry, have the right to be Chin and entitled to enjoy citizenship of the Union of Burma and to maintain their rights to their ancestral homeland – Chinland,**
- 3. Based on the fact that the Chin and Chinland being among the founding members of the Union of Burma through the historic Panglong Agreement we urge, herewith, to all nationalities to continue the struggle to restore a genuine Federal Union;**
- 4. The Chin people having resolved to establish a democratic system in their homeland for more than half a century, abhor and condemn the present military dictatorship and reaffirm the pledge to continue the struggle for the restoration of democracy--by all means;**
- 5. For the sake of non-disintegration of the Union, restoration of democracy and human rights, we herewith, urge all stake holders of the country to find a viable political solution through tri-partite dialogue among the military regime, the 1990 election winning parties and the leaders of the ethnic nationalities in the spirit of national reconciliation.**

**Chin Community Denmark  
Chin Community (Germany)  
Chin Community of Indiana, USA  
Chin Community Norway  
Chin Forum  
Chin Freedom Coalition  
Chin Human Rights Organization  
Chin National Community – Japan  
Chin National League for Democracy (Exile)  
Chin National Organization – Korea  
Chin Student Union of North America  
Chin Women Organization – Japan  
Mara Peoples Party (Exile)  
Melbourne Chin Community  
Women League of Chinland  
Zomi Community Committee (New Delhi, India)  
Zomi Human Rights Foundation (Burma)  
Zomi Innkuan USA  
Zomi National Congress (LA)**