

Burma

Shan State EAOs Reject Myanmar Junta's Demand to Repudiate Resistance

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Ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) based in Shan State have rejected the Myanmar junta's demand that they stop supporting the parallel National Unity Government (NUG), its CRPH parliamentary body, and its People's Defense Force (PDF) armed wing.

Sources told The Irrawaddy that the United Wa State Army (UWSA), the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), and the Shan State Progress Party (SSPP), have refused to comply with the junta's ultimatum.



Representatives of the UWSA, NDAA, and SSPP meet the junta's peace negotiation committee in early January, 2023

The three EAOs attended so-called peace talks with the regime in Naypyitaw from January 5-7, when the junta's National Solidarity and Peace Negotiation Committee (NSPNC) reportedly coerced them into signing an agreement.

"They asked us to sign an agreement not to support and sell arms to the CRPH, the NUG and the PDF. We didn't accept that. There was a heated argument and we told them that we would walk out if they kept insisting that we sign the agreement," a source told The Irrawaddy.

The three-day talks were attended by UWSA vice-chairman Luo Yaku, NDAA vice-chairman San Pei, and SSPP vice-chairman Sao Khun Hseng. The junta's NSPNC was represented by its leader Lieutenant-General Yar Pyae, Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Lt-Gen Min Naung, and others.

The junta said in a statement that "the two sides signed a final agreement that they reached after three days of discussion."

Another source from the three EAOs told The Irrawaddy: "Their statement was designed to mislead the people. We didn't agree to the point on stopping help for the CRPH, NUG and PDF. They asked us to sign up to support their branding of [EAOs] as terrorist organizations. You journalists know who the terrorist organization is. We didn't sign that point."

The two sides also discussed provisions in the 2008 Constitution on building a Union based on democracy and federalism, according to the junta statement.

Junta-sponsored media published photos of the three EAO representatives at the signing ceremony.

Sources told The Irrawaddy that the three groups are concerned that fellow ethnic groups, PDFs, political parties, and Myanmar's people would be misled by the statement.

An ethnic affairs analyst said: "Whatever the Myanmar military does, it always prepares for it with psychological warfare. EAOs must be aware of that. The regime is also making use of EAOs in efforts to claim legitimacy on the international stage. People must be aware of that."

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