



**OFFICE OF THE SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
KAREN NATIONAL UNION
KAWTHOOLEI**

KNU Statement on Humanitarian Assistance for Victims of Cyclone Nargis

The Karen National Union would like to express its sincere condolences to the families of the victims of Cyclone Nargis which devastated Rangoon, Irrawaddy, and Pegu Divisions and Mon and Karen States on 3rd May 2008.

The cost of this humanitarian crisis is incalculable as thousands have died and many more remain missing. In addition to the lives lost hundreds of thousands of people have been made homeless and their possessions, crops and livestock destroyed. They currently have no access to shelter, clean water or electricity and are increasingly at risk from disease.

With the majority of people in Burma already subjected to living under the poverty line and having suffered increased hardship from the escalating costs of fuel, rice and other basic foodstuffs. This disaster, resulting in additional shortages of food, shelter, and clean water, further aggravates an already critical situation for the people of the country.

The military regime, the State Peace and Development Council, urgently needs to allow complete and free access for international humanitarian aid to be delivered to those areas affected by Cyclone Nargis. In these areas victims are now living in the most vulnerable and deprived conditions. If not the military regime's flagrant disregard for the needs of those affected by this disaster further exemplifies the SPDC's unwillingness to care for its people.

For the sake of the victims of this catastrophe, and all the people of Burma, the Karen National Union calls upon the State Peace and Development Council to allow full and unconditional access to those areas affected by the disaster so that humanitarian aid can be provided to those so desperately in need. We would like to call on the international community, especially those countries with strong ties to the Burmese leadership, to persuade the military regime into allowing such aid forthwith and to implore the government to provide a better and more secure standard of living for its people.

While its people are dying and thousands are subjected to living in abject poverty, instead of helping the people the SPDC still insists on continuing with its sham referendum - a referendum that is designed to further enshrine the military's role in ruling the country and to deny the people their aspirations for ethnic and democratic rights.

The Karen National Union stands with the rest of the international community in offering its deepest sympathy to the victims of this disaster and hopes that humanitarian assistance is quickly allowed to reach those so desperately in need.

Central Executive Committee

Karen National Union

Date: May 6, 2008.