

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
(5 November 2021)**

Communiqué: Statements issued by certain governments on incidents in Chin State and north-western Myanmar

1. At the outset, the Ministry recalls the allegations by the two western embassies in Myanmar on 16 and 17 June 2021 which cited that Myanmar security forces had burnt Kin Ma village in Magway region “killing elderly residents.” Yet, on 16 June 2021, the government had broadcasted on public media what actually happened in Kin Ma village. The reality was that the so-called “People’s Defence Force” (PDF), supported by the so-called “National Unity Government (NUG), had started the fire on 15 June 2021 by burning down the house of a villager who did not support them. The fire had spread out of control and government security forces had rescued the elderly people trapped inside. Subsequently, security forces captured some of the PDF terrorists responsible for the violence, the fire and the disinformation to the media. The government has in its possession video testimony of the said terrorists as well as other evidence. These were presented at the government’s eighth media conference on 27 August 2021 to media and to the representatives from foreign embassies in Myanmar who had responded positively to the invitation. All evidence showed that the two embassies’ allegations were false.

2. These two embassies in Myanmar violated diplomatic norms and acted irresponsibly by issuing allegations without checking from official sources. We also note that these false accusations were issued to coincide with the closed door briefing of the Security Council and the UN General Assembly respectively on 18 June 2021. All of this couldn’t have been happened had the embassies of the two concerned governments treated Myanmar with the same courtesy due to any sovereign government, instead of accepting the fake news being circulated by the so-called NUG-supported terrorist groups (now proven to be targeting civilians, including schoolchildren, in a deliberate strategy to destroy the country).

3. It is indeed unfortunate that the government represented by one of these embassies does not appear to have learned the lesson of Kin Ma village, where both embassies were unequivocally proved to have used fake news. Since the past week, that same government has been attempting to use fake news again, without any attempt to consider verified facts, but this time at the United Nations Security Council.

4. This Communiqué aims to apprise the international community of the true events in Thangtlang, Chin State (written also as Thantlang in reports), on which the same foreign government is making allegations.

5. The sequence of events in Thangtlang, Chin State (Annex 1), all of which are documented meticulously and can be proven, showing that the attacks were initiated by the Chinland Defence Force (CDF). The Myanmar security forces retaliated only when fired upon, and as a result, suffered more injury and death. The so-called “escalating military attacks” and “escalating indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population” cited by a

British NGO are misleading, as is the statement from the foreign government urging the military to end their “campaign of violence”. **There has been no attack by the Myanmar security forces against unarmed civilians.** Instead, all violence has been initiated by the PDF (and its supporters such as CDF) not only against security forces, but even more against unarmed civilians, including schoolteachers, COVID-19 vaccinators, monks and community leaders. Like much of the Myanmar public, the Myanmar security forces has desired to end the violence in Chin State and elsewhere. It is the responsibility of the Government to ensure the stability and prevalence of law and order across the country. This includes the Chin State, where the CDF’s armed attacks have been particularly violent. As a result, the security forces have retaliated in self-defence and then conduct operations to flush out the remaining armed terrorists and their caches of illegal weapons.

6. Regarding the latest developments in Thangtlang, the events of 29 October were pre-planned by the CDF. Thangtlang is an isolated and remote town and the attacks by the CDF/Chin National Army (CNA)/ Chin National Front (CNF) against both security forces and civilian targets have terrified the townspeople, who fled Thangtlang in September. About a thousand people fled to Hakha, and the rest to other towns and villages in Chin State. Hakha is Chin State capital where the Myanmar Defence Services (Tatmadaw) Regional Operational Command is seated. Thus, Thangtlang civilians would not have fled there had they been afraid of the Tatmadaw, as falsely portrayed by media reports and western governments. The majority of those who fled to India from Chin State did so in February and March because of the civil disobedience movement, not because of any violence on the part of the military or civil authorities.

7. On 22 October 2021, the CDF tried to blow up Timit bridge spanning the Timit river on the road connecting Hakha and Thangtlang (local reports placed the date as 21 October). The bridge was not quite destroyed until 26 October, when it finally collapsed with the CDF’s repeated attempts. On 29 October at 1145 hours, a security unit was on patrol in Thangtlang town when it was attacked by 20 well-armed CDF. At 1155 hours, the CDF retreated after killing one serviceman and taking his weapon with them. A military contingent of 35 chased the CDF to try to recover the weapon and at 1210 hours was met by a force of 50 CDF. After this armed clash, which had lured the security forces into the town, the CDF kept the security forces at bay with sniper fire from the houses while setting some houses on fire. Security forces rushed to the sole fire engine in Thangtlang Fire Station but found that it had been sabotaged, without any fuel or water in its tanks. The fire spread, and with sniper fire from the CDF, the security forces were unable to stop the fire. There were fire engines in Hakha, which under normal circumstances was half an hour’s drive away, but the authorities from Hakha could not send any help to put out the fire since the CDF had destroyed Timit bridge. In the end, Chin State resource persons estimated that the fire consumed over 150 houses and two churches.

8. The sole purpose of the CDF in this incident was to draw the security forces into an armed clash in town, in order to make up the story that Myanmar security forces were killing innocent civilians, torching houses, and committing “genocide”. The CDF made prior

arrangements to film the burning houses from a drone. Photos and videos of the fire broadcast by CDF-friendly social media showed people (most likely CDF members, since the non-CDF civilians had fled since the incidents on 18 September) standing calmly around the burning houses observing the fire and video-recording. The security forces had no role in the fire but were lured into town by the armed attacks. The military and police presence in town does not mean at all that they started the fire—this reasoning promoted by the CDF is utterly illogical as it implies that the presence of firemen and police in fires means they started the fire. Since 1988, Chin State has been largely peaceful throughout the periods of military and military-supported governments. The violence only began since June 2021, initiated by the CDF/CNA/CNF with support from certain Myanmar diaspora, western governments, and the NUG.

9. The foreign government now attempting to spread the fake news on the Thangtlang events has political motivation to discredit the Myanmar government, particularly just before the G20 Summit in Rome. The threat that this foreign government is discussing the issue of Myanmar on with its international partners in the United Nations Security Council will not work. Myanmar is not a failed state, and its security forces are highly disciplined, operating strictly according to set rules of engagement that are aligned with the Geneva Convention and comparable with those of armed forces of many other countries. Myanmar will protect its national interests, as any sovereign Member State of the United Nations has the right to.

10. As mentioned previously, all that the Myanmar government asks is for those governments and embassies violating international diplomatic norms to treat Myanmar with the same courtesy due to any sovereign government in the region and elsewhere. Only then can we expect improved collaboration and engagement.

11. The above-mentioned facts prove that the manipulative measures taken by certain countries do not help in anything but only result in escalation of internal conflict and further division among the people of Myanmar. The motives for such doings are, therefore, found unacceptable, as these allegations are based on unverified, groundless and biased hearsay. In this connection, the Ministry calls on the embassies to respect the sovereignty and integrity of the host country as well as to observe and follow the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

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Annex: Sequence of events in Thangtlang Township, Chin State, Myanmar

- a) 22 June 2021, 0230 hours: The Chinland Defence Force (CDF) set fire to two police residential buildings and one motorcycle belonging to the private company Asia Golden Bridge.
- b) 5 July 2021: 31-year-old police lieutenant Hein Way Zin Latt was ambushed and murdered by four men while he was on his motorcycle on assigned duties in town.
- c) 15 July 2021: The CDF used improvised explosive devices (IED) targeting the residences of the township administrator, and the township education compound.
- d) 5 August 2021: The immigration office was targeted with bomb attacks.
- e) 11 August 2021: An IED was thrown at the residence of Dr. Hmuh Thang, simply because he was the Chairman of the Union Solidarity and Development Party in Chin State.
- f) 25 August 2021, 1535 hours: A security patrol was attacked by approximately 50 CDF with guns and 60 mm mortar. The security personnel defended themselves with a 40 mm grenade launcher. The PDF withdrew at 1600 hours.
- g) 9 September 2021, 1230 hours: 20 CDF hidden in the compound of the Thangtlang Association of Baptist Churches ambushed and attacked a security patrol on its duties. Lieutenant Soe Hlaing was killed while Private Naing Lin Tun sustained injuries. The security forces fired back. On the same day, at 1250 hours, around 20 CDF attacked the Myoma police station with 40 mm grenade launcher and guns but were repelled by the security forces.
- h) 10 September 2021, 0600 hours: A large contingent of CDF armed with 40 mm grenade launchers and other guns surrounded and tried to take Lung Ler army camp. Four soldiers were injured, one of them seriously. The remaining soldiers defended the camp until the CDF left at 1400 hours.
- i) 18 September 2021, 1400 hours: A security patrol had an armed clash with 100 CDF who were heavily armed, including with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher (RPG). One soldier was injured. At 1645 hours, the CDF retreated. Meanwhile, one of the houses caught fire after being hit by the RPG fired by the CDF. Pastor Cung Biak Hmun tried to put out the fire and was caught in the crossfire. The security troops were forced to eventually retreat. The body of the pastor was taken first by the CDF who then cut off his finger to make it look as if the security forces had done this.
- j) 27 September 2021, 1130 hours: A security unit on patrol within the town of Thangtlang was attacked from behind by around 15 CDF, armed with 40 mm grenade launchers, machine guns and other weapons from the cover of an AG (Assemblies of God) Church and some houses. The security forces defended themselves, and the CDF retreated at 1145 hours.
- k) 29 September 2021, 2020 hours: The security checkpoint at the entrance to Thangtlang town was attacked by 15 CDF with 40 mm grenade launchers and guns. The security forces defended themselves and at 2030 hours, the CDF retreated. Before then, however, the CDF shot at a civilian pickup truck, whereupon the driver U Ral Tu was killed, while his passenger sustained minor injuries. Security forces helped the injured man to safety.
- l) 8 October 2021, 0605 hours: Around 20 CDF with 40 mm grenade launchers, taking cover behind the town's houses, attacked a security patrol. The security forces fired back, and the PDF retreated.
- m) 22 to 26 October 2021: The CDF tried to blow up Timit bridge spanning the Timit river on the road connecting Hakha and Thangtlang on 22 October 2021 (local reports place the date as 21 October). The bridge was not quite destroyed until 26 October,

when it finally collapsed with the CDF's repeated efforts. This meant that Thangtlang was cut off from Hakha. (The bridge is currently being rebuilt.)

- n) 21 October 2021, 1915 hours, 10 CDF surrounded the Myoma Police Station with 40 mm grenade launchers. Security forces defended the station and at 1925 hours, the CDF retreated.
- o) 26 October 2021, 1020 hours: 10 CDF took cover behind the Thangtlang Baptist Church and some houses, and using 40 mm grenade launchers and guns, attacked a security unit conducting routine patrol in the town. The security forces fired back. The CDF retreated at 1030 hours.
- p) 29 October 2021, 1145 hours: A security unit was on patrol in Thangtlang town when it was attacked by 20 well-armed CDF. At 1155 hours, the CDF retreated after killing one serviceman and taking his weapon with them. A military contingent of 35 chased the CDF to try to recover the weapon and at 1210 hours were met by a force of 50 CDF. After this armed clash, which had lured the security forces into the town, the CDF kept the security forces at bay with sniper fire from the houses while setting some houses on fire. Security forces rushed to the sole fire engine in Thangtlang Fire Station but found that it had been sabotaged, without any fuel or water in its tanks. The fire spread, and with sniper fire from the CDF, the security forces were helpless to stop the fire. There were fire engines in Hakha, which under normal circumstances was half an hour's drive away, but the authorities from Hakha could not send any help to put out the fire since the CDF had destroyed Timit bridge. In the end, Chin State resource persons estimate that the fire consumed over 150 houses and two churches.

*Note: “Thangtlang”, Chin State is written also as “Thantlang” in reports. However, “**Thangtlang**” is closer to the real pronunciation and meaning in the local Chin language.*

Figure 1. Timit Bridge between Hakha and Thangtlang, which was finally destroyed by the CDF on 26 October 2021.



Various sources from social media

Figure 2. Thangtlang burning, set on fire by the Chinland Defence Force, 29 October 2021



Various sources from social media

Figure 3. Various people (most likely CDF members) watching and video-taping the fire. The non-CDF locals had all fled to Hakha and other towns and villages since the incidents on 18 September 2021.



Note: These photographs are from CDF-friendly social media, and the government makes no guarantee on the authenticity of the photographs. The label in the first photograph says “Showing video-recording”