

Open letter to the Government of Myanmar



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Here's an open letter from Naga International Support Center to Government of [Myanmar](#):

The Naga International Support Center vividly lauds you for taking the initiative to hold a second Panglong [Conference](#). We praise you because it is high time the Indigenous Peoples of [Myanmar](#) are recognized for their right to self determination, a right laid down in the covenant of the United Nations and signed by [Myanmar](#).

Knowing the organizers of the Panglong [Conference](#) also invited the Naga Peoples of [Myanmar](#) NISC finds it important to weigh the following points:

1 - In 1947, before the first Panglong [Conference](#) took place, the [leader](#) of the Naga [National](#) Council spoke with Aung San personally. He told Aung San that like Nagas told the Simon Commission in 1929 that Nagas wanted to be left alone to look after and govern themselves.

The Nagas then could not attend the said conference but the major people like Kachin, Chin, Karenni and Karen did.

2 - NISC wrote an open letter to the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, now United Kingdom, and [India](#) with the question if they could prove [Nagaland](#) belonged to [India](#) and due to the talks between Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and U NU in 1953 in [Kohima](#). They decided to draw the border between [India](#) and then Burma straight through Naga areas without [as](#) much [as](#) consulting the Naga Peoples themselves. We asked this because Britain only had an agreement with Nagas living in approximately 25% of all Naga areas. Including the Naga lands of what is now [Myanmar](#) the rest was called excluded or un-administered areas of the Free Nagas. We are certain someone, a nation, who does not own it or has no jurisdiction [over](#) can give or transfer it to another or another nation.

3 - The recent history of the Nagas in [Myanmar](#) is not rosy: For example:

Nagas are looked down upon by their brothers and sisters of Burma, the Burmans primarily. They are treated [as](#) second class citizens even in their own land. Worse things happened and are happening even today:

It is an open secret that -at gunpoint- Nagas have been forced to become Buddhists.

It is known that Nagas have been forced to build [roads](#) without pay; they even had to bring their own food

Nagas are forced to become soldiers of the Tamadaw, the Burmese Army, and are severely indoctrinated.

In Naga villages converts to Buddhism are being privileged. They get the best positions and have to convince other villagers to become Buddhists too. This creates a class society because if you [don't](#) want to convert you will be sidelined. Evidently former Governments of [Myanmar](#) have played the game of divide and rule and were successful in demonizing its Indigenous Peoples. The Panglong [Conference](#) could be a great initiative to bring the Indigenous Peoples of [Myanmar](#) together to make them feel at home and appreciated. Still there are some peoples who do not wish to be part of [Myanmar](#) and after deliberations of the why and how should be left alone to govern themselves. Though this is already bad enough

NISC feels there is much more regarding the Naga Peoples of Sagaing Region.

4 - Nagas want to be reunified

The Nagas are the tribes of the Naga Nation who want to be free of any dominance because they [fear](#) they will be overrun and dominated. Nagas were never part of the Union of Burma not even when the British in three [wars](#) practically demarcated the present land area of [Myanmar](#). When the British left they most likely forgot to tell how the Naga lands between [India](#) and Burma should be divided, if at all. In fact NISC asked the Governments of the United Kingdom and [India](#) to show proof of the transfer so that unequivocally [India](#) can [state](#) it has the right to call Western [Nagaland India](#). Likewise NISC would like to see the papers of [India](#) signed by the first Prime Minister of [India](#) Jawaharlal Nehru and Prime Minister U Nu to that effect. This because, [as](#) far [as](#) we can believe their annals, the Nagas were never conquered, neither did they succumb voluntarily to any aspiring nation. And, the British only administered a small part of the Naga domain through an agreement (around 1880) which was not signed.

Knowing that [India](#) aspires to implement the Look [East policy](#) it wants to clear the way to Southeast Asia, it needs your cooperation and [Manipur](#) plus [Nagaland State](#) (not the nation but just a [state](#) in the Northeast of [India](#)) it needs the full cooperation of the Government of [Myanmar](#) and of course of the Nagas Peoples too. To achieve this ties between [India](#) and [Myanmar](#) need to be cordial. Since this [policy](#) benefits both countries the political roadblocks are disappearing. However to make that [policy](#) successful peace in both the Northeast of [India](#) and in [Myanmar](#)'s Northwest is necessary.

Because they affect the Nagas of [Myanmar](#) too NISC is certain the Government of [Myanmar](#) follow the proceedings of the ceasefire and Peace talks between [India](#) and the Nagas with utmost interest. Since 1954 Nagas of [India](#) have been fighting for Independence and to this day around 200.000 soldiers of the Indian Army are present in the lands of the Nagas. Nagas were politically separated by the border between [India](#) and then Burma but also in [India](#) divided administratively by four states. [One](#) of the main important issues there, [as](#) well [as](#) for the Nagas in [Myanmar](#), is reunification. Because the border was arbitrarily agreed upon, it literally runs through houses in villages, Nagas want it removed and so East and West [Nagaland](#) to be reunited (like it was before the British came and colonized part of it after 60 years of [war](#)).

Considering the Panglong [Conference](#) we know that several Indigenous peoples of [Myanmar](#) want to be recognized and would like full autonomy [over](#) their own affairs but do not desire to leave [Myanmar](#). For Nagas it is essential to be reunited but two/third of their land is in [India](#), one third (Sagaing Region) is in [Myanmar](#). NISC knows the Nagas self-administered area but also we know that some areas are excluded. Consequently NISC asks you to include all ancestral lands of the Nagas.

Since it looks like the Nagas in [India](#) are close to coming to a solution of this age old (more than [6](#) decades) but deep rooted conflict and will have a kind of Shared Sovereignty but with their own Naga passports we sincerely ask you that you take the request of the Nagas in [Myanmar](#) seriously because after all the former Government of [Myanmar](#) signed the [UN](#) covenant for peoples who have the right to self determination.

We believe that the step to hold another Panglong [Conference](#) is an important one but [as](#) we laud you for that we also remind you that the Nagas are a people who want to determine their own future.

Knowing that [leaders](#) of the NLD have endured harsh treatment too but are now in the saddle to shape the future of [Nagaland](#) we are sure that your wisdom could prevail.

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