



**Karen National Union Headquarters**  
**Kawthoolei**  
[www.knuhq.org](http://www.knuhq.org)

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**Statement of KNU's Position regarding Land laws of the Myanmar Government**

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has ratified and signed the amendment of The Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law, passed by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No (24) on 11 September 2018. Other laws regarding land have also been discussed on that day. Regarding the laws mentioned above, the central land committee of the Karen National Union states its positions and concerns as follows:

1. The Karen National Union has been managing and administering land at the Central, District and Township Levels according to the policy that was formulated and implemented in line with international standards of land, forest, social and human rights norms. The Karen National Union policy also reflects democratic and federal standards, protection of the lands of indigenous people and their rights. Moreover, the positions and concerns of the general Karen People regarding lands was collected and well-documented as a result of national political dialogue. Thus, all those positions and concerns must be included in political discussions and negotiations.
2. The recent amendment of the “The Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law” merely concentrates on the centralist systems that has been formulated by the governments of the Myanmar from time to time. It shows no concerns to the rights of indigenous people or human rights norms, and it does not reflect the democratic and federal principles. Moreover, it contains huge contradictions to the positions and concerns of the Karen People as a whole and to the land policy of Karen National Union. It discourages peace building, trust building and the formation of the future Federal Union.
3. The amendment of the “The Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law” is violating the agreements and contracts between Karen National Union and Government as follows: articles 9, 10, and 11 of the preliminary ceasefire agreements between the Government and the Karen National Union on 6 April 2012. Moreover, it violates the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), which was signed by Government, Tatmadaw and Ethnic Armed Organizations, especially article 9 of Chapter Three on the Protection of Civilians and article 25(a-1) of Chapter Six.

4. We call for the elimination of the “The Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law” that can produce disputes and conflicts. We encourage the review, amendment, elimination, and rewrite of other land laws that do not comply with the principles of democracy and federal standards. The enactment of controversial land laws could contradict the formation of the Democratic and Federal Union in accordance with the NCA. Thus, we encourage the legislative bodies to enact the law reflecting the NCA that encourages the formation of the Democratic and Federal Union.

In attempting the sustainable peace process in line with the political goals, for the well-being of the whole Karen population, the Karen National Union issues this statement on behalf of the Karen People whose interests suffered and were damaged. The Karen National Union will firmly stand and implement the policy and governance structure to comply with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

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