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# **Models and Designs for Building a Federal Democratic Union**

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## 1. Introduction

Following the military coup in 2021, Myanmar's political reform and democratic transformation process, which had been progressing for a decade, came to an immediate halt. In addition, the "Myanmar peace process," which aims to "build a federal union" cannot be implemented in practice, and the parties involved in the discussion have various views and processes pertaining to the current situation. The peace process has stopped. On the other hand, after the coup, armed resistance forces have emerged in all parts of Myanmar. The emergence of the organizations based on ethnic homelands, regions, ideology and the authority of the National Unity Government (NUG) are mainly seen.

One of the characteristics of this military coup is that it does not prioritize only democracy, but rather the construction of a federal union, minority affairs, ethnic affairs, etc., are being demanded.

The National Unity Government (NUG) and the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) carried out the formation of ministries related to federal affairs, creating spaces where everyone can participate in the discussion and in the drafting of the Federal Democracy Charter.

It has been found that some Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) have made military cooperation with the National Unity Government (NUG) and may not participate in political discussions. That is, there are no same visions, assumptions and approaches to building a federal democracy that is acceptable to all.

There is no common agreement on how to build a federal democratic system, how resources will be shared, and how ethnic representation should be defined. Some organizations have also talked extensively about the confederation system.

## 1. Research objective

Following the military coup, there are various models and designs in various regions and states about the construction of the federal union. This research paper aims to identify the current developments regarding the construction of the federal union after the military coup and the difficult issues that are to be discussed between the organizations. In addition, it also aims to identify and present a federal democratic model suitable for Myanmar. This research paper will reflect the need for the forces fighting against the military coup to achieve political developments at a time when they can make military gains.

## 2.1 Research methodology

The data and evidence used in this research is based on two main sources. First, it is obtained through interviews with the individuals who are directly or indirectly involved in the research. In addition, as a second method, we obtained the data from published newspapers, journals, articles, bulletins and reports, etc.

The names of interviewees will not be revealed in order for them to be able to express their views and opinions freely unless they have given their consent. However, in order to ensure the integrity of the research data, the names of the interviewees, organizations and related information are systematically kept.

### 3. Key discussions

In the research discussions, the studies will bring together the different views related to the building of federal democracy in the period before the military coup. In addition, the efforts to build a federal union will be analyzed along with the political landscape that has changed since then.

### 3.1. Differences in view of federal construction

Since independence in Myanmar, the Panglong Treaty has become the main manifestation for the establishment of the federal union. In particular, the 1947 Constitution, which tried to unite the states and create a federal union (Coming Together Federal Model) was accepted generally.

However, successive military coups have weakened Myanmar's efforts to establish a federal union, and efforts have been made to establish a unitary state. Later, the military leaders defined the word "federal" as they wanted, and only established the "Putting Together Federal Model."

During the political reform period of 2010-15, the 2008 Constitution was widely discussed, and efforts were made to shape the democratic system and federal structure in the peace process. However, it has been halted ahead of the 2020 general election due to disagreements on security issues and on the resolution of key issues in political discussions. After about 10 years of efforts, some agreements were reached, but the implementation process could not be started and had to be stopped. Due to the military coup in



2021, it has faced new conditions, and the form for the establishment of the federal union has changed.

During the peace process, 51 agreements were reached, most of which were accepted as the foundations for building a federal union. There are different views between the ethnic revolutionary armed forces and other forces, on the reform and abolition of the 2008 Constitution. There were also different views within the leadership on the fact that the constitution could be reformed in the peace process with agreements.<sup>1</sup> Along with political issues, security issues were of equal importance, and these security issues were the most divisive.

In particular, the issues of "maintaining a single army" and "how to build the future federal army" were discussed strongly. Especially in the Security Sector Reform (SSR) & Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes, the basic concepts of the participants differed and even it was difficult to continue the discussion. The Tatmadaw firmly held the view that if the federal army is formed, our Three Main National Causes will be threatened. As for the ethnic revolutionary forces, disarmament and integration into the existing army were seen as an impossible situation with the existing trust.

The question of how the federal components will be formed has been a debated topic in the history of Myanmar's federal union efforts, and there is no consensus on it. In particular, will the state or part of the Burma people be formed into the existing regions? Or will Burma be formed as a big state have become the main questions.

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1 IDEA. (2022) Analysis and Prospects of Myanmar's Federal Democracy Charter.



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However, if all the existing regions are formed into a large Burma state, not only in terms of territory but also in terms of population, such a large part will have the issues such as political power, the resources and the allocation of funds are complex and politically sensitive. Therefore, in the history of the attempt to create a federal union, these questions are old ones, but the status and stances of groups that must answer the questions, often become new.

In particular, there are the topics that have caused political differences such as what will be the attitude of other ethnic groups living in the existing state if the ethnic groups that have a strong political and military power and have not yet officially achieved statehood are asking for statehood.

In building a federal union, there were no common opinions on the matter of how to build it at the union level, and on the issue of how many federal states would be formed, there was no situation that could be accepted and resolved politically by all. There are still many issues to be discussed in sector-specific issue, such as the security sector and the economic sector. The 2021 military coup brought everything to a halt and pushed us into a new situation.

## 3.2. Post-Coup Federalization Efforts

Due to the 2021 military coup, public movements have sprung up all over the country, and due to the military's violent crackdowns, the people have chosen armed resistance rather than peaceful non-violent struggle, and armed groups have emerged all over the country. The Committee Representative Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), the National Unity Government (NUG) and the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) were formed respectively. They started working for the revolution against the military coup and the emergence of a federal democratic union. However, some ethnic revolutionary armed forces did not participate directly. Some ethnic revolutionary armed forces, such as the Karen National Union (KNU), the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and the Chin National Front (CNF) joined the fight. Most of the northern armed forces were already engaged with the military under the existing political framework of the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee (FPNCC). They mainly carried out military assistance and joint operations.

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included in it and the majority of the Burmese people were dominant. In addition, up to eight ethnic revolutionary armed forces and 33 other groups joined the NUCC. However, these figures are constantly changing.

This means that there are still some underlying problems of "trust" between the ethnic revolutionary armed forces and the Burmese-based revolutionary organizations. It has been found that some of the Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs) are learning from the history of organizations such as the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB) and the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), which emerged in the aftermath of the 1988 military coup.

One of the debates that has come to light after the 1988 military coup is the term "Burmese state". In particular, armed forces representing the Burmese ethnic group were established, and the idea of a Burmese state had become stronger. The vision of establishing a Burmese state is not new, but forming a representative armed force for the establishment of a Burmese state is unique. Throughout history, the Tatmadaw has long been believed not only as the representative of the Burmese people, but as the

representative of the entire country. After the 2021 military coup, it is facing an existential crisis.

In political negotiations, the viewpoints of the ethnic revolutionary armed forces based in northern Myanmar are portrayed as the need for confederation. This is obvious if we look at the statement of the Arakan Army (AA). However, these organizations are not the main participants in the political discussions of the National Unity Government (NUG). Those organizations mainly talk about matters related to war and how to attack the "common enemy". However, politically-strategic relationships have yet to be seen.

After "Operation 1027", the military links between the Three Brotherhood Alliance and the National Unity Government's People's Defense Forces (PDFs) have become more evident. For the National Unity Government (NUG), rather than political consensus, military assistance from northern groups seems to be more necessary and important to attack the military council. Therefore, it is found that military objectives are more important than political discussions at this time.

## 4. Analyzes

In this research, relevant organizations and leaders were interviewed about the unique federal democracy building events, attitudes and developments in regions and states following the 2021 military coup. The findings are summarized. The facts about Arakan State, Shan State, Karen State, Kachin State, Mon State and Tanintharyi Region are not described in this research. Especially in Arakan State, there are separate political developments, and it is irrelevant to the federal union building issue related to the whole country. Shan State is more complicated, and there are many developments with the armed forces of other ethnic groups such as the Wa people, Shan people, Kokang people, Pa-O people and the Palaung people. So, it is necessary to study them separately. In this research, models and designs for the emergence of a federal union in Karenni State, Chin State and Sagaing Region are analyzed.

## 4.1 Karenni State

Karenni is one of the regions where the armed insurgency has spread fastest since the 2021 military coup. The Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF) has grown in strength and has been able to cooperate harmoniously with the existing Karenni Army (KA). Later, organizations such as "Karenni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF)" joined the revolution. The Karenni State Consultative Council (KSCC), the Karenni State Interim Executive Council (IEC) and the Karenni State Interim Parliament (KSIP) were formed respectively, demonstrating Karenni State's political and military developments.

In relation to these developments, the Chairperson of the Karenni Consultative Council (KSCC) U Aung San Myint said, "Karenni has also exercised their right to self-determination from the revolutionary period to the present day federal democratic system building period. That's why the KSCC was formed on 9 April 2021 immediately after the coup. We have carried out providing the necessary security, education and humanitarian assistance needed for the people."

At that time, there was confusion in implementation because of the lack of a clear structure and accountability. That's why it was reviewed and then an interim arrangement was drafted in 2022. The interim arrangement is not a constitution, but it acts like a charter. It is based on consensus that is acceptable to all. The KSCC was reformed from 17-20 January 2023.

Under the KSCC, there are committees for education, health, humanitarian assistance, finance, Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), strikes, and transitional justice. The newly-formed KSCC has its own specific mandate and role. It formulates and approves policies and strategies. It reformed three branches to implement policies such as administration, legislation, and judiciary. It has an interim parliament with 14 members elected in 2020. Under its leadership, it is drafting legislation, said U Aung San Myint.

As for the administrative sector, the IEC was formed with six departments under it such as home affairs, education, humanitarian assistance, management, finance and tax department, and women and children department. There are 6/7 independent courts that are doing judicial work, he added.



“At least 65 percent of the territory in Karenni State has come under control. The military council now controls only about 15 percent. Therefore, this is the best time to systematically exercise the right to self-determination in a practical manner. Currently, township administrators are being reformed individually. From this point onwards, it will continue to be practiced until the transitional period and federal democratic system building period,” said U Aung San Myint.

According to the timeframe recognized by the NUCC, there are three periods - the interim period, the transitional period and the reconstruction period. According to experts, the current period is the revolution period. Following it comes the interim period, then the transitional period, and then the federal democratic system building period. However it unfolds, it is going according to the interim arrangement. There is cooperation between the National Unity Government (NUG) and the National Unity Consultative Committee (NUCC), as a form of mutual relations between the Union and the States, he said.

The Karenni are seeking federalism. The political objectives are establishing federalism with a strong federal democratic system, said U Aung San Myint. The state constitution has also been drafted for the interim period, he added.

“It is designed to bring change to the whole country not by a form that one group seizes power but through systematic change. Therefore at this time of national affairs, it is important that leading stakeholders accept and agree on this common stance. If there is no agreement on this, building a future federal system will face difficulties and the ethnic affairs and Myanmar affairs cannot be



**The Federal Democracy Charter states that sovereignty must derive from ethnic people in the state.**



resolved,” explained U Aung San Myint.<sup>2</sup> Regarding the establishment of a federal union, there is still a need for a common understanding of the concept of 'federal' between all stakeholders. It is found that the federalism desired by ethnic nationalities and the federalism desired by other political parties and stakeholders do not yet have a common concept,” said U Aung San Myint.

The federalism desired by ethnic nationalities will guarantee national equality, justice, and the right to self-determination. In addition, they advocate for bottom-up federalism. This means a transition from a federalism that goes from the strengthening of the states to the welfare of the union. It is crucial to establish a common ground and point of view among all those involved. The reason is when discussing federalism in terms of power sharing between the Union and States - it was thought that matters like security, natural resource sharing, foreign affairs and the Citizenship Law would be controlled by the Union, he added.

“Today, in real federal countries, these have changed and states have been given more power. As in the past, in a federal state, if it is said that sovereignty must come from the people, then all

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<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from interview with U Aung San Myint (Chairman, KSCC) published on BNI-MPM



**After taking the opinion of all the state holders, it is accepted that the model of Karen State that will go today will be inclusive and collective leadership.**



ethnic groups cannot have equality. If only the will of each individual person is taken, there will be no fairness for ethnic minority peoples and the Bamar majority will always be the political decision makers," said U Aung San Myint.

Therefore, in today's Federal Democracy Charter (FDC), it is included that sovereignty must come from the ethnic peoples within the states. "The reason is because a leadership appointed just by holding nationwide elections is not capable of leading the country; states' stances are the priority in the electoral system. Also, states must be allowed to carry out matters that they can handle quickly and practically. Only matters that are difficult for states to handle will be allowed for the Union to handle - this is the concept of bottom-up federalism. In the FDC, there is also the concept that the head of the state is above the union minister. This is the true essence of bottom-up federalism and it needs to be understood and accepted by all." explained U Aung San Myint. <sup>3</sup>

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3 Excerpt from an interview with U Aung San Myint (Chairman, KSCC) published on BNI-MPM

"Before forming the KSCC, unity was built between stakeholders within the state. Only after taking the opinions of all stakeholders, today's model of Karenni State will be based on all-inclusiveness and collective leadership - this stance was adopted. But some groups cannot yet participate due to their stance, security etc. but armed groups, political parties, elected Hluttaw representatives, youth groups, CBO/CSOs, strike committees, women's groups and so on, fully participate," he added about the problems of implementing federalism at the state level.

The problem is that many educated people and political experts from Karenni State cannot yet participate. The reasons can be due to security or family difficulties. "When representing the state, technical assistance is needed.," said U Aung San Myint.

"About one third of the public are displaced so there are huge financial needs. If ethnic armed groups and ethnic parties do not work based on this bottom-up federalism concept (of political equality) but only focus on democracy, the role of ethnic peoples will decline. This has been done all along and everyone has already agreed. We see that some domestic politicians only accept centralized federalism. As an important next two points for the country's future, when negotiating the form of state – we can see five forms," said U Aung San Myint.

The Shan-proposed principle consists of seven states and one Bama National State (Eight-state Principle). The emergence of news states in addition to two ethnic states, 2 or 3 Bama states, the national states and nationalities states included in the FCDCC, and existing 14 states and regions, he said. "Without agreement, how to draft the constitution and how to share power and structure

the country - these issues have not yet been resolved. If these can be clarified and agreed upon, groups not yet participating can also join. First is agreeing on the federal concept and secondly, deciding the form of state and power sharing between states and Union. It is not possible for anyone to set a timeframe on when there will be total agreement but agreement on the federal concept itself is needed nonetheless. Once agreed, establishing and drafting will be very brief. While some are working on state building, the main problem is this very issue," said U Aung San Myint.

Regarding ongoing efforts, 31 groups are discussing at the NUCC. One difficulty of the NUCC is that decision making requires full consensus. The understanding of this term is still not the same among all. In our view, if there are 31 groups and 25/27 agree, that should be accepted. The current form is that if one group disagrees, we cannot move forward - so there are difficulties. Efforts related to this are also being made. We should move based on the mentality of country's best interests, not individual group's and personal interests - only then can we reach our destination quickly. It seems to me the NUCC can't move forward at all due to the current deadlock, explained U Aung San Myint.

Therefore, the NUCC will soon hold a national conference to discuss how to move forward. The NUCC is a platform with the participation of most stakeholders but not all political stakeholders have been able to participate yet. That's why after holding a national conference by the NUCC, there is still a need to discuss in a conference with the participation of all armed groups, organizations, experts, and intellectuals who have not yet been able to participate," he said.

“Only then can the best form of future federalism emerge and understanding between all is needed. There have been extensive studies and analyses of Myanmar's political problem by experts and it has been a long time moving towards a single unified system, with over 70 years of civil war as well. For Myanmar's peace, systemic change is needed and everyone unanimously agrees that the system should be federal democracy. All stakeholders need to know this. I think that if confederation or independence is sought at this time, there will be difficulties for national stability and tranquility,” said U Aung San Myint.

“If we can build it ourselves, in today's globalization era and the concept of one state, one nation, we need to consider whether we can stand on our own within one state and one ethnicity. The main point is to think about what system can resolve Myanmar's political problem. Karenni State believes federalism is the solution which is why federalism is chosen,” he added. Historically, the Karenni State was independent. Only since 2001 has federalism has been considered.

“Rather than what is desired, what should happen was considered. If confederation or independence is sought, there will be enormous international pressure and recognition issues. There can be many good and bad consequences. Therefore, if political equality can be guaranteed and ensured, groups not yet able to participate can join under this federalism. The problem is inability to decide this yet and that's why some call outright for confederation or independence,” explained U Aung San Myint.<sup>4</sup>

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4 Excerpt from an interview with U Aung San Myint (Chairman, KSCC) published on BNI-MPM

## 4.2 Chin

After the 2021 military coup, Chin State has played a major role in the resistance and anti-coup opposition. Many Chin defense forces and ethnic-based defense forces emerged in townships. As the strength of the Chin National Army (CNA) and the Chinland Defense Force (CDF) grew, more organizations also developed. However, in Chin State, problems of distrust between ethnic nationalities are common. Chin ethnic armed groups control about 90 percent of the territory in Chin State and administration systems function systematically at the township level.

However, state-level governments that can oversee the entirety of Chin State have yet to be formed. After the Interim Chin National Consultative Council (ICNCC) was formed, attempts were made to organize administrations without success. Later, the 108-member Chinland Council was formed. The Working Committee Chinland Council Conference (WCCCC) will be set up under this council to carry out the administration, the judiciary and legislation. In addition, the Interim Chin National Consultative Council (ICNCC) includes Hluttaw representatives, township-level Chin defense

forces, township/regional people's administration groups and so on. However, some local defense groups are still unable to participate.

The Chinland Council aims to draft a Chin State constitution. Once this is completed, a Chin State Council will be formed to carry out the administration, the judiciary and legislation. During that time, groups not yet participating will also be engaged. Chin State will work towards a federal union and also coordinate with the National Unity Government (NUG).<sup>5</sup>

In addition, another important organization is the Chinland Joint Defense Committee (CJDC). It includes the Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA) and about 17 township-level Chin defense forces. Security and defense matters are mainly discussed at the CJDC. There are still many issues to be discussed between political and security institutions in Chin State. Instead of state-wide considerations, Chin State is trying to obtain agreement between ethnic groups and armed groups within Chin State.

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5 Subject: Formation of WCCCC, Objectives and Current Situation  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1085761285740331>



## 4.3 Sagaing

After the 2021 military coup, Sagaing Region has been one of the areas resisting the military. In addition, after the coup, the largest number of newly-formed People's Defense Forces (PDFs) emerged in this region. Some of them are aligned with the National Unity Government (NUG) while some were formed independently with the help of other ethnic armed revolutionary groups. As some were set up in resource-constrained areas initially, tensions and clashes between groups have taken place.

Later, as the revolutionary forces grew stronger, the Sagaing Forum was held for political, administrative and military reasons jointly by civil, military and other forces in the region. Representatives from 173 organizations from 28 townships in Sagaing Region attended.<sup>6</sup> Discussions covered the political, administrative and military sectors and the forum was convened with the aim of forming a Regional Advisory Council. A follow-up second and third forum is being planned. Preparations are underway to hold the second forum.

The distinctiveness of the Sagaing Forum is that it is a political and military platform bringing together forces that emerged in a

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<sup>6</sup> How far will the Sagaing Forum, which aims to propel the Revolution forward, go? (BBC Burmese, 1 June 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/burmese/articles/cw4vld2lnmko>)

Bama/Bamar-centric federal unit. With many armed groups gathering for discussions, reaching consensus was a challenge. Especially on how federalism will be approached - will it be as a Bamar unitary state or based on the existing Sagaing Region. These remain difficult questions for the Sagaing Forum. This is because if the Sagaing Forum model succeeds, similar political dialogues and forums may emerge in other Bamar majority regions like Magway and Mandalay Regions. How the National Unity Government (NUG) will strategically view the emergence of these forums is the question. Since the Sagaing Forum conveners clarified that they do not intend it to be a rival establishment but as a platform to resolve tensions between armed groups.

The Sagaing Region represents a model for federal union construction for the majority Bamar-populated regions in Myanmar. However, whether to what extent it will work remains to be seen. In particular, if the Sagaing Forum can serve as a platform to resolve disputes between armed groups, its intended purpose may be fulfilled. Additionally, in the transitional period, it is necessary to seriously discuss other pressing social issues like the plight of displaced people.

## 5. A federal democratic model suitable for Myanmar

All analysts agree that a federal democratic system is the only practical way to solve Myanmar's problems. There are different types of federal systems. U Aung Htoo, a federal legal expert, explained that it is necessary to consider the basis of the federal system, the country's history and practical problems when making an approach to the federal system that is suitable for Myanmar.

The purpose of forming a federal unit is to seek equality. Historically, in the 1961 Taunggyi Conference, ethnic groups including Myanmar agreed to the principle of 8 states. Based on that principle, when the federal constitution was drawn up in the Manerplaw Liberated area, instead of limiting it to 8 states, it was agreed that there would be national states (7 ethnic states and Burmese states) and nationalities states (9, 10).

Therefore, there is a question about the formation of the Burmese state at this time. It will be historically more appropriate and fairer if the regions such as Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay, where the majority of Bamar people live, can be united to form the state of Myanmar. The current political problem in Myanmar can be solved based on the principle of 8 states and the Federal Constitution

Drafting and Coordination Committee (FCDCC) principle, which can be expanded to include more states. In addition, the necessary steps to go to the federal democratic union in Myanmar are also described step by step. Step (1) is that all groups need to understand and accept the essence and meaning of the federal system. Federal system is the unification of separate countries, states and political groups within a political system of related coverage.

Step (2) is that the individual units involved in the formation of the union under that political system can maintain their own existence. Step (3) is that the federal system relationship must be based on the Perpetual Covenant of The Union, and the concept of the desired federal system needs to be based on that agreement.

Based on that, a written constitution must be used. Based on Self-Rule and Share Rule, power sharing should be applied. The federal government needs to be composed of representatives sent by the states. Therefore, every state must have the right to draft its own constitution. Step (4) is to reduce centralization or ensure optimal centralization. Step (5) requires accommodating different groups/ethnicities within each state.

Step (6) is that there are three levels of administration—the federal level, state level and local level. Each level must be politically integrated with a democratic-based administrative system. Step (7) is that the union must provide for the emergence of a political party system that does not exercise centralization. As the last step, for the problems that have not been negotiated, the decision of the court must be followed. It has been analyzed that the federal democratic system in Myanmar will be successful only if these factors are fulfilled and implemented comprehensively.



**The current Myanmar political problem can be solved based on the principle of the Federal Constitution Drafting and Coordination Committee (FCDCC), which can be expanded to include eight states.**



According to the advantages and disadvantages of the current state-federal units and indications on how it should be done, it is likely to be successful if the states lay the foundation of the federal unit of the state properly. It has been pointed out that it has not been able to work properly until now. In the current ethnic states, the lack of legal process is a weakness.

The administrative models that are currently being developed are not law-based administration, but also there is still no judiciary that oversees the advantages and disadvantages of administration. States must have a constitution. The term "Government" should be used instead of using the term "Interim Administrative Council". If legislation, judiciary and administration can be systematically organized, the federal unit of the state will be stronger.

The basic human rights of the people must be included in the interim constitution. A federal democratic system suitable for Myanmar is a federal system with sovereignty in ethnic states called Provincial Sovereignty. Therefore, only the states are the main ones, and problems between the clans in the states and between different ethnic groups must be negotiated in the state. If this requirement can be met, the federal unit in the ethnic states will be strengthened and the construction of a federal democratic union will be more elaborate.

## 6. Policy Recommendations and Conclusion

Since the military coup in 2021, many new armed groups have emerged and the military's political and security crisis is clearly visible. In addition, the prospects for building a new nation have improved as the restoration of democracy now holds equal importance to the implementation of federalism. However, issues such as ethnic conflicts, inter-ethnic border disputes, and requirements for the emergence of new states, or difficulties in reaching agreements due to the proliferation of armed groups make discussions more complicated. Therefore, this research focuses mainly on the Karenni, Chin and Sagaing regions where developments have been taking place.

Previous considerations of building a federal union are no longer feasible. Especially with the emergence of new armed groups and demands for new states, inter-ethnic disputes over territory, and shifts in military and political power due to the backing of powerful factions. There are significant impacts on considerations of building a federal union in future Myanmar. In particular, with the proliferation of organizations demanding confederation, and the increase of their power and influence, they could become more influential. In this



**At every roundtable talk on building the future federal union, the security sector reform will inevitably become one of the most important issues to be negotiated.**



situation, policymakers need to consider building a federal union as a benchmark and prepare in advance for political coordination.

In addition, the emergence of new federal units should be anticipated in building the future federal union. Especially if other ethnic revolutionary armed groups in Shan State demand the emergence of a new state. Discussions are needed in advance on how this would be addressed. Policies are also needed to establish the requirements for forming a new state. Only then can considerations based on military power be avoided and discussions based on civil dominance and policies be created.

Finally, security sector reform will inevitably become one of the most important issues to be negotiated in any future federal union building conversation. If this cannot be discussed, no political agreement will be sustainable and only security issues will continue to fester. Additionally, new approaches to federal union construction will also be needed when discussing solutions. To solve these new challenges, it is crucial that political maturity is embraced by all stakeholders in order to accept new ideas.

*Note: (The statements contained in this report are solely findings obtained from the research process and interviews.)*

**It is important that political maturity with new ideas be accepted among all stakeholders in order to solve new challenges.**

