

**Burma Refugees Commission
Report November 4, 2020**

The Burma Refugees Commission had a virtual meeting on October 27 with following leaders represented:

Rev. Dr. Maung Maung Htwe from Myanmar Baptist Churches USA,
Rev. Dr. Thlaawr Bawihrin from Chin Baptist Churches USA,
Rev. Dr. San No Thuan from Chin Baptist Association of North America,
Rev. Dure Zau Hkawng from Kachin Baptist Churches of USA,
Rev. Tulum Lamung from Kachin American Baptist Association,
Zo Tum Hmung from Chin Association of Maryland,
Joan Friesen from ABCGI, Leslie Turley from IM, Jeff Woods and Florence Li from ABHMS.
Rev. Dr. Saw Ler Htoo from Karen Baptist Churches USA was absent due to health issue.

There were three items being discussed:

1). Individuals who were impacted by coronavirus – Some representatives reported there were members contracted with the virus and some had passed away. Rev. Dr. Saw Ler Htoo reported later that there were about 150 Karen members passed away and about 1,000 or more were infected. Rev. Dr. Maung Maung Htwe lost his daughter from the virus, he and his wife were both in the hospital.

Leslie Turley shared Rev. Dr. Reid Trulson (former Executive Minister for International Ministries) offered a seminar on November 1 for the Myanmar Baptist Convention and the Myanmar language/ethnic group leaders on the topic of, "Christian Leadership in a Democracy".

Joan Friesen shared ABCGI received a grant from the Forum for Theological Exploration (a Lilly Endowment funded entity) to mentor Chin Young Adults who feel a call to ministry. There are also two pastors Rev. Mark Hetrick and Rev. David who work with the region on mentorship program.

Florence Li reported that a few diaspora churches had applied for the Covid-19 Recovery grant from ABHMS.

2). Zo Tum Hmung shared two reports his organization had worked on. He urged the Commission continue to advocate for the refugees especially the Rohingyas from Rakhine States who were forced out from their homeland.

Two reports were attached in this report.

- UNSAFE: Chins Seeking Refuge in Malaysia and New Delhi, India
- UNPROTECTED: Chin IDPs in Chin and Rakhine States, Myanmar/Burma

Zo shared the Trump Administration had released an official refugee admission of 15,000 for 2021 which is significantly lower than past four decades of 95,000. Florence will follow up with him and the Commission post-election season. Leslie had written a letter to Senator Bob Casey and he replied to her (see attachment).

Dr. Jeff Woods shared the document “AMO Status and Burmese Diaspora” discussed and released by the Professional Ministries. The document reflects current policies and practices regarding ordination of members of the Burmese Diaspora. (see attachment)

There were questions asked by the diaspora leaders and Dr. Woods is open to answer more questions via emails. Florence encouraged the leaders to share the document with their respective board and key leaders.

Due to Coronavirus and pandemic, all travels were put on hold domestically and overseas. Advocacy activities are putting off till further notice.