

Burma Refugee Commission Report for BGM November 2022

The Burma Refugee Commission has met several times since June, focusing upon gathering information from the Burma Diaspora as well as information from Myanmar and distributing that information for the purposes of prayer and advocacy work.

MAJOR PROJECT: CAMPAIGN LETTER SIGNING NOW (SEE ATTACHMENT)

Due to the amount of advocacy work needed, a subcommittee called Burma Advocacy Group (BAG) from the Burma Refugee Commission has actively been requesting and holding meetings with Republican Senators who hold strategic committee positions that could influence the bill, namely: Young [R-IN], Rubio [R-FL], Risch [R-ID], and McConnell [R-KY]. Under the guidance of Roy Medley, General Secretary Emeritus, BAG had initiated another strategy of a campaign letter as the last push. Letters to President Biden and Secretary of State, Antony Blinken have been written. Rev. Henry Lyann, Rev. Duh Kam from Chin Baptist Churches USA's Peace & Justice committee, together with Van Kio, a member of the U.S. Chin Coalition, and Zo Tum Hmung, executive director of Chin Association of Maryland and community activist, have been extremely active in the advocacy campaign. A copy of the letter writing campaign is also attached.

BURMA WORKSHOP AT WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

A delegation of four people including Jeff Woods (OGS), Rothang Chhanngte (ABHMS), Leslie Turley (IM), Saw Ler Htoo (KBCUSA), and 2 Burma leaders in Thailand attended the World Council of Churches in Germany and presented a workshop on September 1st. They also ran into a contingency of Burma leaders from the U.S. who inquired about more information from Jeff Woods who were interested to form a task force.

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) IN KUALA LUMPUR

A concern was brought up to Leslie Turley by a Chin leader in Malaysia that the UNHCR office will be ceased to operate in Kuala Lumpur, and that the Malaysian government decided to take control of dealing with the undocumented Burma refugees. Florence Li expressed concern about the security and protection of the Burma diaspora people. The Kachin Refugee Committee in Kuala Lumpur had already sent a letter to the Kachin Baptist American Association (KABA) about the help they need.

PROSPECT WORK: BURMA ADVOCACY GROUP (BAG)

Jeff Woods will meet with BAG members to clarify the role of BAG and BRC. BAG has been vocal on the Burma Act Bill and advocating for humanitarian aid to Burma. As they are seeking to expand their work even further, Jeff Woods will meet with them regarding ways to clarify their structure, seek 501c3 status, and define their relationship with ABCUSA.

Below are the key leaders who are involved in BAG and who have taken key roles to advocate for their people in Burma. As the diaspora leaders are becoming more actively involved, the list is an important record and is intentional to be shared here.

List of Burma Advocacy Group Members (BAG):

Burma Bill Campaign – Van Kio
Burmese Baptist Churches USA – Maung Maung Htwe
Chin Baptist Churches USA Peace & Justice – Duh Kam & Henry Lyann
Chin Baptist Association of North America – Sanno Thuan
Chin Coalition of America – Stephen Kio
Chin Association of Maryland – Zo Tum Hmung
Karen Baptist Churches USA – Saw Ler Htoo
Kachin Baptist Churches USA – Ah Le Laking
Kachin American Baptist Association – Tu Lum Lamung
Kachin Alliance – Gum Sam Nsang
US Campaign for Burma – Myra Dahgaypaw
Young people Movement – Jan Jan Maran
Young People Movement – Terrance Htoo
Zotung Baptist Association – Mang Hau
REMC – Joan Friesen
IM – Leslie Turley
OGS – Jeff Woods; Roy Medley (G.S. Emeritus); Florence Li

Submitted by:

Florence Li
Burma Refugee Commission