

Mediation tool in Myanmar

Clearly the conflict in Myanmar, a confusion of ethnic groups with a long history of animosity against each other and the government, is not ripe for direct negotiation. We need instead to find a place inside each of us where we are all the same. And that place is children.

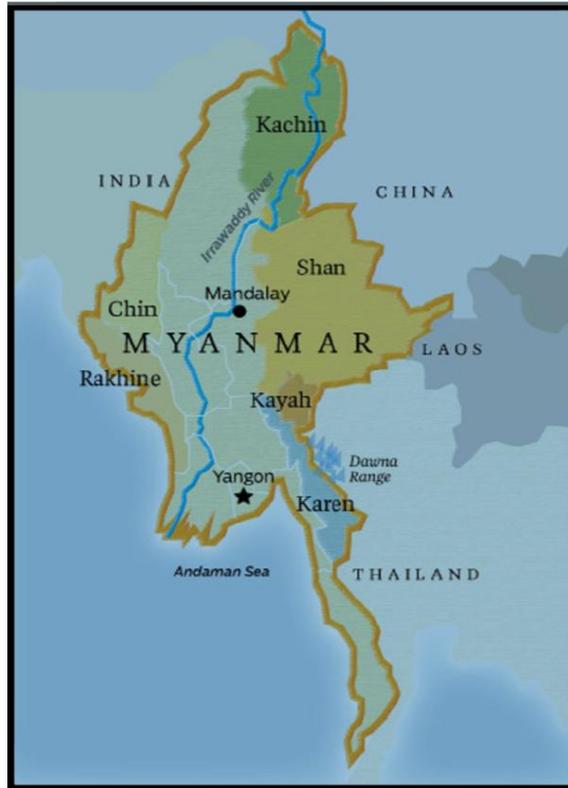
Our eventual goal is to create groups of ordinary citizens throughout the country to create common ground. But our first strategy is one that stands alone, and that is to have a national Day of Remembrance for all the children who have died during the conflict. People from all over the country will be invited to submit names of those who died as children. No matter that if they had lived they might have been elderly today, we want names of all those who were killed before they reached the age of 18. In addition to the submissions we will obtain names from death rolls or any other source we are able to find.

On the Day of Remembrance we will have floating lights. To each of the floating lights will be attached the name of one of these children. The main location for the event will be Yangon, at the mouth of the Irrawaddy River near where it reaches the Andaman Sea. This location has the benefit that anyone who cannot get to Yangon can place a light anywhere along the length of the Irrawaddy. It will eventually make its way to Yangon.

The event will be publicized widely such that all media outlets in Myanmar will carry only this event. Worldwide coverage will be scheduled, to give maximum visual impact to the lights on the water and how extensive has been the loss of life.

Once the event is over, we will introduce the idea of saving the next generation. Anyone who wishes can sign to attend town meetings that will be held in locations that will enable participation across ethnicities. These meetings will all include small groups where people can talk about their losses. Here again there will be no negotiation or any formal plans but rather an emphasis on the personal losses that each has experienced. Discussion will be directed away from blame or responsibility for these losses and toward the common experiences.

That long blue vertical line is the Irrawaddy River.



The following map was included because it gives a closer view of where the event will be held. Note that on this map Myanmar has the old name of Burma and Yangon is labeled by its old name of Rangoon.



