



**Red Lantern  
ANALYTICA**

**MAPPING THE GEOPOLITICAL FALLOUT  
OF STEERING COUNCIL FOR THE  
EMERGENCE OF A FEDERAL  
DEMOCRATIC UNION (SCEF),  
MYANMAR**



**AUTHORED BY :**

**Lt. Col. Ujjwal Abishek Jha  
(Retd.), DCCP**

**Strategic Advisor and Geopolitical  
Analyst, Red Lantern Analytica**



# ဖက်ဒရယ်ဒီမိုကရေစီပြည်ထောင်စုပေါ်ထွန်းရေး ဦးဆောင်ကောင်စီ

Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union - SCEF

The ongoing internal conflict in Myanmar witnessed formation of another anti-junta (Myanmar military led government) alliance on 30 March 2026, the Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union ([SCEF](#)). This alliance was formed three days before the Senior General Min Aung Hlaing was elected as the President, post December 2025- January 2026 elections in Myanmar. The SCEF alliance members are National Unity Government (NUG), the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) and four Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs) namely Kachin Independence Organization ([KIO](#)), Karen National Union ([KNU](#)), Karenni National Progressive Party ([KNPP](#)) and Chin National Front ([CNE](#)). The timing of the formation of SCEF appears to be deliberate and the symbolic, coinciding with the same time of the Tatmadaw attempting to garner legitimacy of newly formed government.

## REASONS FOR THE FORMATION OF SCEF

**National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) & Fragmented Resistance** - The NUCC, formed on 08 March 2021, was first attempt by the NUG to form a unified political structure. The NUCC included elected members, political parties, civil society and several ethnic organizations as an advisory and coordination body. But, the internal disagreements, competing organizational interests and the inability to translate political consensus into unified military command, weakened the NUCC. The KNU and KNPP withdrew their NUCC membership in November 2025. The NUCC's failure reflected a deeper problem that ongoing anti-junta movement in Myanmar was without a central body to guide the entire country politically and militarily. Various stakeholders of anti-junta forces including EAGs operated as per their own strategic needs, presented conflicting positions in the international forum and carried out ad-hoc military operations, and not coordinated (As of June 2026, anti-junta forces control approximately 40% of total territory of Myanmar).

**Challenging the Legitimacy of Junta** - The explicitly stated reason for the formation of SCEF is to counter the junta's attempt to institutionalise military rule as civilian governance. The formation of SCEF can be a decisive escalation in the anti-junta landscape by uniting political leaders and EAGs to expose and dismantle the junta efforts. In addition, formation of SCEF days before new government could have acted as a signal to international forums to recognise it as legitimate political authority.

**Conjugation of Fragmented Resistance & Establishing a Unified Military Command** - The formation statement of SCEF clearly addresses the five-year problem of fragmented coordination and need to adopt and implement the principle of "one policy, one strategy". SCEF now presents a single, unified position enabling qualitative upgrade in the international diplomatic efforts. Moreover, the establishment of an integrated military command structure (10-member Military Strategy Coordination Committee comprising two military leaders each from KIO, KNU, CNF, KNPP and NUG) with a policy leadership hierarchy for direct command, represents the first formal joint military decision-making structure.

**Need for Promoting Federal Governance** - The governing principle of "shared sovereignty" by SCEF positions ethnic community as equal partners rather than minorities to Bamar, presenting a federal architecture, resonant since independence of Myanmar.

## Three Pillars of SCEF

### States/Federal Units/EAGs

Representation of ethnic  
organizations & Federal  
Units

### The People

Ensuring Sovereignty and  
Collective participation  
of Citizens

### Women

Guarenteeing women's  
representation &  
Leadership in political  
military & institutional  
manner

# POLITICAL GOALS OF SCEF

The background features a stylized, golden-yellow illustration of a traditional Chinese landscape. A winding path leads through the scene, starting from the bottom right and curving upwards and to the left. Along the path, there are several figures on horseback, some carrying packs, and a person on foot. In the middle ground, a traditional Chinese pavilion with a tiled roof stands on a small platform. The landscape includes jagged, rocky mountains and several trees with dense foliage. The overall style is reminiscent of traditional Chinese ink wash painting but rendered in a flat, golden-yellow color scheme against a dark background.

## End Military Rule:

Overturn the usurpation of state power by the military & terminate armed forces involvement in politics

## Abolish the 2008 Constitution:

Completely abrogate the military-drafted constitution and prevent its reinstatement

## Civillian Control of the Military:

Ensure all armed forces operate solely under the command of a civillian government elected through democratic processes

## Draft a new federal democratic constitution:

Create and promulgate a new constitution based on federalism and democratic values, with consensus from all relevant parties

# STATUS OF SCEF STAKEHOLDERS

**NUG** - Formed on 16 April 2021 by members of the ousted elected parliamentarians, ethnic representatives and civil society leaders, the NUG is the civilian political peak of SCEF. The NUG with its fold brings international legitimacy (recognised by international governments and civil society organizations), diplomatic infrastructure in terms of embassies, liaison offices and international networks across the US, Europe, Australia and ASEAN and People's Defence Force fighters. However, it has limitation in terms of its geographic displacement, lack of proper command structure, ability to hold ground and limited formal international support.

**Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH)** - The CRPH is the parliamentary body formed by elected members in 2020 elections. It provides constitutional legitimacy.

**Kachin Independence Organization/ Kachin Independence Army (KIO/ KIA)** - The KIO is one of the most powerful and significant EAG in Myanmar. Formed in 1961, it governs the Kachin State through its administrative wing and armed wing KIA. Kachin State borders China to the north and India (Arunachal Pradesh) to the northwest, making it critical for both Beijing and New Delhi. The KIO's decision to formally join SCEF represents a major shift and signals its calculation that the resistance trajectory is strong enough to risk Beijing's displeasure.

**Karen National Union/ Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/ KNLA)** - The KNU was formed in 1947 and is the oldest continuously operating EAG with its armed wing KNLA. KNU controls significant portions of Kayah (Karen) State along the Thailand border, which controls the critical Three Pagodas Pass trade route and the Salween River corridor. Its primary contribution to the SCEF is its organizational experience, access to Thai-Myanmar border and capability to operate insouthern Myanmar, where the NUG is relatively weaker.



**Karenni National Progressive Party/ Karenni Army (KNPP/ KA)** - The KNPP represents the Kayah (Karenni) people of Kayah State, with KA as its armed wing. KA, in coordination with newly formed Karenni People's Defence Forces (KPDF), has achieved territorial gains in the Kayah State. The geographic location of Kayah State gives the KNPP strategic significance in the central and eastern conflict zone.

**Chin National Front/ Chin National Army (CNF/ CNA)** - The CNF represents the Chin people of Chin State bordering Mizoram, India. The inclusion of CNF in SCEF is particularly significant for India because of its relevance to India's border security and connectivity projects.

## ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING SCEF BUT NOT JOINED FORMALLY

Tanintharyi Federal Unity Implementation Council (TFUIC) operating in southernmost Myanmar controlling coastal area. Sagaing Federal Unit Interim Government (SFUIG), which is controlling parts of Sagaing Region. Mandalay Interim Regional Administration, which has governance structure in controlled areas of Mandalay Region. Technological Teachers Federation (TTF) and local/ community defence forces are others who support SCEF but not yet formally joined.

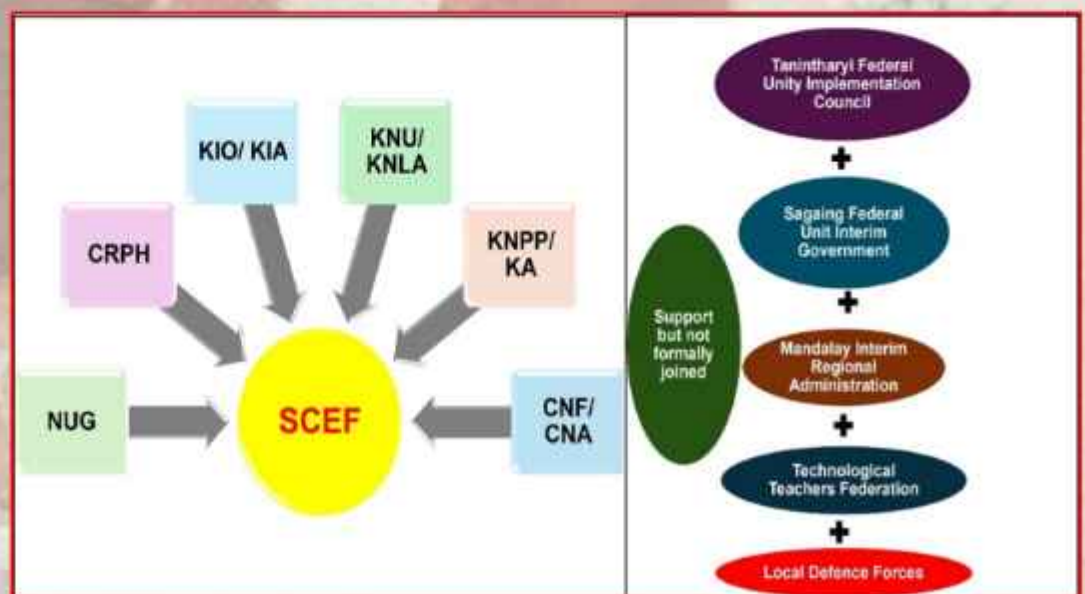


Figure 1: Stakeholders of SCEF

### **Critical Missing Stakeholders**

Arakan Army (AA), Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and Spring Revolutionary Alliance (SRA) are prominent and critical stakeholders who have not joined SCEF, thereby efficacy of SCEF remains to be seen.

### **External Support**

SCEF is actively attempting to establish diplomatic engagement with Western governments and reportedly met the Canadian government officials. However, any substantial development with other western countries is yet to be achieved.

## **ANALYSING THE SCEF STATUS**

### **Manifestation of SCEF**

Territorial Control (as of 25 June 2026) - The SCEF has comparatively larger control of territory than NUCC. The on-ground manifestation of Military Strategy Coordination Committee (MSCC), joint command body of SCEF, include, coordinated positioning of KIA in Kachin State with PDFs in Sagaing Region, joint planning for operations in Chin State and continued governance of KNPP in Kayah State.

**Political Manifestation** - Towards the political side, the manifestation activities of SCEF include submission of coordinated inputs to ASEAN, delegation to Ottawa, Canada to establish international parliamentary-level engagement, announcement of direct diplomatic engagement with China and India as priority objectives and maintaining contacts with EU representatives and US government officials.

**Governance Manifestation** - SCEF induces the existing governance structures of member organizations as models for the establishment of intended federal administration. The aspect of federal administration has been a core contested issue since independence of Myanmar for the ethnic minorities. The propagation of "principle of shared sovereignty" with central authority and the ethnic state administrations jointly exercise governmental powers, and use of existing model presents manifestation of intended federal governance of SCEF.

**Strengths of SCEF** – The members of SCEF possess historical durability by surviving through decades of conflict with military. It brings together diplomatic legitimacy of NUG and military capability and territorial governance of EAGs. SCEF presents a more unified voice in the diplomatic engagements as well as military engagements. The democratic claims to SCEF are brought by the CRPH and along with the EAGs (both formal and supported) it has almost 40% of territorial presence.

**Weaknesses and Challenges of SCEF** - The absence of critical and prominent EAGs (AA, TNLA, MNDAA and SRA) are a significant gap. AA controls the territory strategically relevant to both India and China and without them SCEF cannot claim to represent the complete landscape of Myanmar’s resistance movement. The probability of Chinese interference on SCEF members to moderate their stand or to engage with present government exists. The capability of SCEF members to resist this pressure is an important factor to decide their durability. The US ambiguity on possibility of engaging the Min Aung Hlaing government can be a challenge for SCEF to gain international positioning. The members of SCEF have diverse organisational cultures and have operated independently for decades, thereby challenging task to integrate and shared sovereignty principle is operationally demanding.

<b>Analysis of SCEF</b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses and Challenges</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical durability - KIO, KNU, KNPP, CNF, survived decades of military rule.</li> <li>• Complementing factors – NUG’s diplomatic legitimacy &amp; EAGs military capability with territorial governance.</li> <li>• Unified diplomatic voice – can credibly speak for the majority of Myanmar’s resistance.</li> <li>• Military coordination architecture - enables synchronized operations across multiple theatres.</li> <li>• Democratic legitimacy – through the CRPH &amp; EAGs.</li> <li>• Territorial reality – approximately 42% of territory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical Missing Voices as AA, MNDAA, TNLA and SRA.</li> <li>• China’s potential interference and SCEF members ability to resist such pressure.</li> <li>• US ambiguity to engage with Min Aung Hlaing, can make SCEF’s international positioning harder.</li> <li>• Differences in Organizational culture of members, operated independently for decades.</li> <li>• Principle of shared sovereignty is organizationally correct but operationally demanding.</li> <li>• Lack of relative funding and armament leads SCEF to face asymmetric disadvantages.</li> </ul>

Figure 2: Analysis of SCEF



## IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

The present Myanmar policy of India has been primarily junta oriented as they are holding power at Nay Pyi Daw and disengagement will only provide more opportunity to China. The specific Indian interest in Myanmar includes the security along the Indo-Myanmar border (IMB) impacting North East Region, containment of growing Chinese influence, connectivity projects and access to natural resources of Myanmar. However, in the present dynamics in Myanmar, the IMB is mostly dominated by EAGs (SCEF members and AA) and only formal engagement with junta may not be in the security and developmental interest of India.

In this context, SCEF presents a viable option for dual engagement for India with its presence along the IMB. It provides a formal diplomatic framework for communication along the IMB, counter-insurgency collaboration (KIA/ KIO) areas opposite Arunachal Pradesh in Myanmar (bases for Indian Insurgent groups), assistance for border management from Sagaing Federal Unit Interim Government in areas opposite Manipur and Nagaland. India also needs to counter growing Chinese influence as an indispensable mediator in Myanmar.

The emergence of the Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union in March 2026 marks a structural shift in internal dynamics of Myanmar. This shift alters the strategic setting along the Indo-Myanmar border. The attempts to consolidate the diplomatic and military command of major Ethnic Armed Groups alongside the National Unity Government, the SCEF is trying to present unified alternative to the junta and a stakeholder to recalibrate India's dual engagement. This dual engagement has direct implication for stabilising security situation along the Indo-Myanmar border in India's North East region. There is a need for New Delhi to move forward and beyond status-quo of junta engagement and needs to proactively manage other relevant stakeholders as SCEF to secure own borders and present itself as major player in the Region, keeping focus on the on-ground manifestation of SCEF.





**Red Lantern  
ANALYTICA**

# Everything Analytica.



[REDLANTERNANALYTICA.COM](https://redlanternanalytica.com)

© 2026 Designed by Titlee Ray for Red Lantern Analytica (RLA). All rights reserved.