

# **IKMAS SEMINAR SERIES NO. 5/2018**

## **MYANMAR'S DIFFICULT TRANSITION TO PEACE, DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY**

In her book *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma*, Ithaca NY: Cornell University, 2004, Mary Callaghan has argued that the Burmese army which seized power from U Nu's civilian government in 1962, subsequently ruled the country as though it was conducting a war against its own citizens, and especially against its ethnic minority groups. Just ten years ago, there existed 16 ethnic armed groups fighting the Tatmadaw.

Although a new Constitution was passed and adopted in 2008, which paved the way for the holding of elections in 2010 and again in 2015, in the latter case resulting in the ascendancy of Aung San Syu Kyi as State Councillor, in fact, the Tatmadaw continues to wield power in the country. For the 2008 Constitution allows the military to control the ministries of Defence, Home Affairs (including local governments) and Border Security. It also guarantees that one-fourth of all seats in the Union and state/regional parliaments are reserved for the Tatmadaw. Much of the economy also continues to be controlled by the army. Since 2016, Daw ASSK has been actively pursuing a Peace Treaty with the ethnic armed groups. However even as she was inviting them to the negotiating table, the Tatmadaw was conducting military campaigns against them. This is the wider context for locating our understanding of the current Rohingya problem.

### **About the Speaker:**

**Dr Francis Loh** was previously Professor of Politics, Universiti Sains Malaysia, and President of Aliran, a multi-ethnic multi-religious human rights organisation. Since his retirement, he has been Senior Advisor of the Forum of Federations (Ottawa) under whose auspices he has been conducting workshops throughout Burma on federalism, democratisation and good governance. He has been visiting Myanmar regularly since 2012.

**Bilik Mesyuarat IKMAS  
Bangunan IKMAS  
UKM Bangi**

**17 May  
2018  
2.30pm-3.30pm**

