The Karen Women's Organization Strongly Condemns Ongoing Violence & Brutality Being Perpetrated Against Women

24 December 2021

Amid worsening hostilities in Karen State, the lives of innocent civilians are increasingly at risk as thousands continue to flee in search of safety. The Karen Women Organization (KWO) strongly condemns the ongoing, systematic human rights abuses being perpetrated against villagers who have been indiscriminately targeted in a series of unrelenting attacks by the military junta, including the murder of Naw Khee, a 56-year-old woman killed on 21 December.

Naw Khee was working on Robin Farm in Yar Khee Klo early in the morning with her husband when fighting between the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the Burma Army broke out. The clashes were with Burma Army Battalion, LIB-101 along with five Border Guard Force (BGF) soldiers, led by BGF Commander Bo Maung Soe. As the junta troops approached Naw Khee, her husband fled. Terrified and alone, she was violently interrogated. When she responded that she did not know where the KNLA soldiers were, the soldiers broke her nose. A gun was then put in her mouth and she was shot to death. Her body was found by local villagers on 22 December who dared not retrieve her until the junta soldiers had left the area.

Burma has become a battlefield as the junta plunges the country further into armed conflict. Women, children and the elderly are being subjected to frequent bombings, artillery strikes and indiscriminate firing. With violence increasing, ongoing attacks against women and girls are a reoccurring crime being perpetrated with impunity by the junta. Every day, there continues to be more incidents of torture and killings.

The military's expanding offensives in ethnic areas and unrelenting air and ground strikes has forced thousands to flee and seek safety. Dozens have been killed, arrested and disappeared. As a result of the increasing offensives, the number of internally displaced persons and refugees are steadily rising on Burma's borders of Thailand, China, India and Bangladesh. Limited access to areas where the military has established bases has only

heightened the level of concern KWO has for the many who are displaced and living in fear without protection.

Justice has been denied and dismissed for victims of the regime's attacks. Women across the country are facing a multi- burden: a lack of human security, a loss of civil liberty rights due to the military's attempted seizure of power. Accountability for the mass crimes committed by the Burma Army, including genocide, are long overdue.

KWO reinforces our calls for:

1. Immediate sanctions on aviation fuel to halt the jets and drones bombing Karen State. Suppliers are in violation of international law.

2. Sanctions on gas revenue to halt funds which go into the pockets of the military junta and fuel their war on the people.

3. A referral of Burma to the International Criminal Court to ensure those responsible for committing mass atrocities are held accountable.

4. Urgent delivery of humanitarian aid to displaced civilians through cross border channels who can provide assistance.

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