



The Human Rights Foundation of Monland Condemns Escalating Violence in Southeastern Burma on International Peace Day

For Immediate Release

21 September 2023

The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) is concerned about the increasing violence the military junta perpetrates against civilians in Southeastern Burma. On International Peace Day, HURFOM expresses our ongoing distress for the plight of the people who have been displaced from their homes and separated from family members due to ongoing conflict in their villages. Decades of prolonged civil war in Burma have denied pathways to justice for the thousands of victims and survivors. The international community must respond urgently and in line with democratic norms and principles. They must also recognize that the junta is not a partner in peace.

Across Southeastern Burma and throughout the country, a culture of military impunity continues to thrive. Nearly 2,000 residents from Nyat Phaw Taw village, Kyaikhto Township, Mon State, have recently been forced to flee due to artillery weapons being fired by the regime. Since the last week of August 2023, the military junta camps stationed in Kyaikhto township have launched endless attacks into Padauk Taw, Zee Gone, and Nyat Phaw Taw villages daily. This has led 1,956 people from the 435 households in Padauk Taw, Zee Gone, Kara Wai Saik, and Nyat Phaw Taw villages to seek refuge in remote areas of the forest where they lack access to adequate food, shelter, and protection.

Civilians on the ground expressed fear to HURFOM, sharing that no one dares to stay in their homes: *“The military fires about 10 to 15 artillery weapons a day. There are also damaged houses. Now, there is no one in the village.”*

Residents fleeing due to artillery weapons fire have not returned to their homes until September 15 and need humanitarian aid, including basic food, said an IDP who fled the conflict. Nearly 200,000 conflict-affected refugees are currently seeking shelter in the Karen National Union (KNU) Brigade (6) area.

On 12 September, the Karen Women’s Organization (KWO) released a statement condemning the airstrikes by the Burma Army, particularly in Kler Lwee Htu, Mutraw district, which have killed and wounded at least 30 civilians, mostly women and children. This murderous military has not hesitated to fire upon schools or clinics.

Amidst the ongoing conflict, the junta fires at civilians and arbitrarily arrests them indiscriminately. They are often abducted and forced to be used as porters. On September 11, 2023, after the battle in Pitut village, the military shot a civilian and abducted several villagers.

The clash occurred between the military junta troops, around 30 forces, and the People's Defense Forces (PDF) from the No.1 Battalion of Myeik District, according to the No.1 Battalion announcement. Before leaving Pitut village, the army destroyed the villager's homes. They also took the accessories, clothes, food, and valuables.

Therefore, it is abundantly clear that the military junta cannot be trusted to lead or facilitate peace dialogue. They have repeatedly ignored the demands outlined in ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus and shown an utter disregard for protecting and promoting fundamental freedoms. Any engagement with the illegal military must be recognized for what it is - a betrayal of the people of Burma, who continue to show resilience and strength despite the dangerous circumstances they are living in.

Peace for the people means recognizing past grievances and crimes committed against them by the military forces. Transitional justice pathways must ensure accountability for communities and individuals who have suffered. Lasting peace is possible in Burma through federalism and local governance structures initiated, established, and led by people on the ground.

The United Nations Secretary-General has stated that peace is not automatic but the result of action. HURFOM calls upon UN agencies and ASEAN regional leaders to immediately cut ties with the military junta. The regime weaponizes aid as the root cause of civil war, poverty, inequalities, and injustices in the country. To deliver humanitarian assistance, international actors must commit to meaningful engagement and collaboration with legitimate stakeholders, including civil society organizations and local service providers.

World leaders must commit themselves to working towards sustainable peace with concrete actions that commit to building, operating, and maintaining stability for all citizens in Burma.

They must show their support and solidarity by supporting the calls of the pro-democracy movement. This includes sanctioning aviation fuel and an international arms embargo and funding civil society organizations to ensure they can continue facilitating aid through cross-border aid.

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