



## **On World Refugee Day, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland Calls for Protections for Refugees and Conflict-Affected Communities**

20 June 2025

*For Immediate Release*

Today, on World Refugee Day, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), condemns all forms of violence perpetrated against refugees and conflict-affected communities and urges immediate attention and a response to their struggle. With fears growing about further military operations, thousands of people in HURFOM target areas of Mon State, Karen State, and the Tanintharyi Region face ongoing threats to their daily survival as the junta conducts daily campaigns of terror.

Since the illegal coup in 2021, the junta's ongoing violence has forced more than 3.5 million people across the country to flee their homes. Communities that have been routinely uprooted continue to be targeted by the junta, despite their peaceful nature. Their attacks have not spared religious sites, hospitals, schools, or residential areas. The gendered impacts of the refugee crisis cannot be overlooked. Vulnerabilities for all women and girls are heightened due to the widespread impunity for perpetrators, including repeat offenders.

Dozens of cases documented by HURFOM illustrate a pattern of indiscriminate firing, targeting displaced communities who are sheltering from the violence that has consumed their daily lives. Since the earthquake at the end of March 2025, the junta has launched more than 920 airstrikes and artillery attacks, resulting in the deaths of at least 590 people, including many in Mon and Karen States and the Tanintharyi Region, where HURFOM is actively working. Even more troubling is that numerous attacks took place during the junta's claimed "ceasefire" period.

The instability caused, particularly the junta's indiscriminate shelling and aerial threats, has forced a large number of civilians to flee. With no guarantee of safety, hundreds of families are now left with no choice but to abandon their homes, seeking refuge wherever they can. The humanitarian toll continues to escalate as junta forces expand into populated areas, leaving fear, destruction, and displacement in their wake.

Despite the humanitarian crisis, cross-border assistance remains extremely limited. The eastern Thai-Burma border remains largely closed, making it nearly impossible for essential supplies, such as food, medical kits, tarpaulins, and baby formula, to reach displaced populations. The suspension

of U.S. cross-border aid following the Executive Order has exacerbated the crisis, severing a vital support line for local ethnic service providers and humanitarian responders.

The humanitarian crisis facing communities along the Thailand-Burma border has reached a critical point. In an urgent joint appeal, 20 Karen human rights organizations—including civil society groups, ethnic health providers, and refugee service networks—issued a statement on 7 May 2025, calling on the international community to respond immediately to life-threatening aid cuts affecting more than 108,000 people living in displacement camps. In addition, the more than 87,000 refugees living in nine camps along the Thai-Burma border are facing extreme uncertainties amid funding cuts.

Refugees already experiencing food shortages must now survive on daily rations worth as little as \$0.05 to \$0.10. For children under five, monthly food allocations have dropped to just 53 Thai Baht (USD 1.50), and for adults, it's only 87 Baht (USD 2.40) monthly—hardly sufficient for survival. These cuts have been driven by long-term funding reductions from major donors, including the United States.

People in the camps are currently facing significant difficulties, and conditions are worsening each day. There is an increase in depression, and feelings of hopelessness are leading to higher rates of drug and alcohol abuse, as well as more violence against women and children. Reduced funding results in more children dropping out of school, fewer teachers being employed, and even fewer study supplies being provided. Decreased funding also results in insufficient medical staff in the clinics, a shortage of medicines, and almost no referrals to Thai hospitals.

HURFOM reiterates our calls for urgent global action to stop the junta's violence and hold them accountable. With the proper support, individuals can return home safely and with dignity, allowing them to start rebuilding their communities and futures. During times of such turbulence and instability, there must be unity to safeguard protections and security for refugees and IDPs who have endured immense pain and suffering at the hands of militarized forces. They must be empowered with opportunities, resources, and psychosocial support that acknowledge their suffering and provide them with pathways to heal with dignity.

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*HURFOM was founded by exiled pro-democracy students from the 1988 uprisings, recent activists, Mon community leaders, and youth. Its primary objective is to restore democracy, human rights, and genuine peace in Burma. HURFOM is a non-profit organization, and all its members are volunteers with a shared vision for peace in the country.*