



The Human Rights Foundation of Monland Expresses Alarm and Condemns Ongoing Airstrikes Targeting Civilians in Karen State

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For Immediate Release

The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) is extremely alarmed at the onset of airstrikes deployed by the military junta in Karen State. These deliberate and unjust attacks have targeted civilians and local infrastructure. Despite a ceasefire declared by the military in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake, the regime has not hesitated to continue its aerial assaults. Between 15 April and 16 April, the junta carried out several airstrikes in Kawkaerik and Hpa-pun Townships, killing several people, including women and children. HURFOM condemns the illegal actions of the regime and calls for an immediate response by the international community to hold the junta accountable for their ongoing human rights violations.

On April 15, just before noon during the Burmese New Year holidays, the military junta launched an airstrike targeting a Buddhist monastery in Kanni village, Kyondoe town, Kawkaerik Township, Karen State. At least six civilians were killed, and approximately 19 others were injured, including monks and laypeople observing the Uposatha precepts at the monastery. Witnesses said the bombs, dropped by military jets, directly hit the compound. One bomb struck a Probox vehicle, killing all three people inside. Another landed on the monastery itself, killing at least three more individuals who were there for religious observance.

The airstrike came amidst escalating clashes between the junta's troops and allied resistance forces. Since the evening of April 14, the junta has been shelling villages along the Kyondoe road using howitzers and heavy artillery. Joint resistance forces have reportedly launched counteroffensives near the Yinkwetaung military camp, close to the Military Operations Command No. 12. This deliberate attack on civilians, especially in a religious sanctuary during a peaceful holiday, has sparked widespread fear and anger among locals.

The next day, on April 16, the junta launched another attack early in the morning. The deadly airstrike and heavy artillery targeted Nwar Chan Gone village, near Kyon Doe Town in Kawkareik Township, Karen State. The bombs hit villagers and vehicles preparing to flee the area, killing at least 14 civilians. Witnesses confirmed that junta jets and drones bombed areas where residents were organizing evacuation plans. Among the dead are a husband and wife whose bodies have been recovered. Others remain buried under debris and have not yet been retrieved.

“One of the victims is Ko Ganan, around 40 years old, and his pregnant wife. They were both killed. They were Hindu. We’ve only been able to recover their bodies so far. At least 14 people were killed in total. Everyone else is still running for safety,” said a local aid worker supporting displaced villagers.

The deadly airstrike occurred during Burma’s New Year Water Festival (Thingyan), when many civilians were gathered in villages and monasteries. The same area had been attacked just a day earlier, on April 15, when the junta bombed Kanni village monastery in Kyon Doe, killing six civilians, including four children between the ages of 3 and 15.

A second attack on April 16 occurred just after 12:40 PM, when the junta launched yet another airstrike targeting civilians in Karen State, this time dropping bombs on Myaukkanmayaik village, Kawkareik Township, using a Harbin Y-12 aircraft.

A pregnant woman, just days away from giving birth, was tragically killed on the spot. At least six other civilians were seriously injured, including a 7-year-old child. The attack occurred during the traditional Thingyan New Year festival, when most villagers were home participating in religious and cultural ceremonies.

A member of a frontline medical team, who wished to remain anonymous, expressed outrage:

"Even after Malaysia’s Prime Minister called for a ceasefire, the junta continues to target civilians, even during the Thingyan holiday. This isn’t just happening here; it’s widespread. The junta does not intend to engage in real peace talks. ASEAN leaders, including Malaysia, must understand that continuing to engage the junta while turning a blind eye to these atrocities amounts to enabling war crimes and legitimizing impunity."

Another local CBO staff member based in Kawkareik shared:

"This year's Thingyan has become a painful and bloody memory. We won't forget. One day, justice must be served. I also urge our ethnic resistance organizations—Karen and Mon alike—to take real responsibility in protecting civilians. They must ensure that civilian areas are not used as shields and must issue early warnings when military operations are expected. In addition to physical protection, we need collective efforts to provide humanitarian support—food, medicine, and safe shelter."

Following the airstrike, more than 200 villagers have fled Myaukkanmayaik, taking refuge in nearby plantations and forest areas out of fear of additional attacks.

Yet another airstrike occurred on April 17 at 8:00 AM when the junta dropped bombs on Thayettaw village in Kawkareik Township, Karen State. Two bombs were dropped by a jet fighter directly above. One male villager was killed instantly, and at least four others were seriously injured, including two men and two children.

"This happened without warning. The jet appeared suddenly, and within moments the bombs dropped—no time to flee, no time to hide," said a 35-year-old local volunteer assisting displaced villagers.

"People scattered in panic, trying to take shelter in bomb shelters, irrigation ditches, or under homes. Many elderly people, women, and children were crying and screaming. It's terrifying. We don't know when the next strike might come—or why we are being targeted."

Thayettaw is a densely populated village with approximately 720 households and a population of over 3,800. Most residents were still in their homes, as the attack occurred during the Thingyan festival's New Year Day—a time usually marked by peace and community gatherings. HURFOM's documentation team confirmed that the two injured children, both around 10 years old, were rushed to Mawlamyine for emergency treatment by local rescue teams. The condition of the two wounded adult males remains unknown.

This latest assault follows the horrifying pattern of recent attacks carried out by the junta in Karen State. As of now, more than 400 households from Thayettaw have fled into nearby fields, orchards, and forests, fearing additional airstrikes. Many left behind their homes, livelihoods, and belongings in search of safety.

These targeted attacks on residential communities came in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in the country, during what should have been a time of rescue

and relief efforts. Instead, the military junta has continued its deliberate assaults on unarmed civilians, deepening the suffering of those already in crisis.

The international community and other regional stakeholders, including ASEAN, must see that the ongoing attacks by the junta are further indications that they are not partners in peace, nor can they be trusted in any form of dialogue.

Coup leader Min Aung Hlaing is a war criminal who has not once hesitated to fire upon innocent civilians. Impunity must come to an end by ensuring the situation of human rights in Burma is referred to the International Criminal Court by the United Nations Security Council. A global arms embargo and targeted sanctions on aviation fuel will send a strong and clear message to the junta that their war tactics will not be tolerated. These steps forward will also save thousands of lives.

Furthermore, without coordinated and meaningful action, these attacks will continue to serve as a stark reminder of the junta's brutality and their disregard for the protection and preservation of human life.

Media Contact

Nai Aue Mon, HURFOM Program Director

Email: auemon@rehmonnya.org

Signal: +66 86 167 9741

HURFOM was founded by exiled pro-democracy students from the 1988 uprisings, recent activists, Mon community leaders, and youth. Its primary objective is restoring 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.