



Karenni Civil Society Organizations Call for Justice and End to Military Impunity in New Joint Report: *“How can we survive in the future?”: Atrocity Crimes in Karenni State*

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(Chiang Mai, Thailand) The Karenni Human Rights Group, the Kayan Women’s Organization, the Karenni National Women’s Organization, and the Kayah State Peace Monitoring Network today released a new report, *“How can we survive in the future?”: Atrocity Crimes in Karenni State*. The report documents human rights violations amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by junta forces in Burma’s Karenni State and surrounding areas between May 2021 and September 2022.

The serious violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law committed by junta forces include both indiscriminate and targeted attacks on Karenni civilian populations, murder and mass killings, widespread destruction of civilian property, forced displacement on a massive scale, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and cruel treatment, sexual violence, and using Karenni civilians as forced labor and human shields.

“The Burmese Army continues to conduct militarized activities, including the use of heavy artillery against civilians in Karenni State. Women and children are the most vulnerable in conflict. Civilians across the country, including Karenni State, have been forced to flee their homes and move to the jungle. The situation has become increasingly unstable due to armed clashes,” said Mie Mie, Chairperson of the Karenni National Women’s Organization.

1,190 homes in 87 Karenni towns, wards and villages have been either heavily damaged or completely destroyed by junta forces. At least 180,000 Karenni people have been forcibly displaced, which is more than 40 percent of the estimated total Karenni population. Up to 70 percent of internally displaced people (IDP) are women and children. Some families have been displaced multiple times, as IDP sites come under attack by junta forces.

An internally displaced woman interviewed for the report whose home was destroyed by the regime's mortar shelling said, "I lost everything. I don't know where to take my children to stay and hide. I am really afraid and I don't know where we can keep running safely."

The report also documents the arbitrary arrests of at least 260 Karenni civilians including 33 women by junta forces throughout Karenni State and neighboring areas. 115 Karenni civilians were documented to have been unlawfully killed while in Burmese military custody over the reporting period, including in three mass killing events.

Based on legal analysis of the data collected, the report finds that members of the Burmese military have committed the war crimes of attacking civilians, attacking protected objects, pillaging, murder, torture, cruel treatment, and displacing civilians in Karenni State. The conduct likely also amounts to the crimes against humanity of imprisonment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, murder, torture, enslavement, other inhumane acts, and forced displacement.

The four Karenni organizations urged the international community to pursue justice and accountability to end the cycle of impunity for the Burmese military. This should include referral of the situation in Burma to the International Criminal Court, which would provide a pathway to justice and reparations for the thousands of Karenni victims. They also renewed calls for the international community to take concrete steps beyond 'statement diplomacy' to protect the thousands of civilians who live with the daily threat of being murdered by the military regime. These steps should include imposing a coordinated global arms embargo on the Burmese military and sanctioning aviation fuel supply in a bid to end deadly air strikes.

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