



**Date: November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

### **KWO Statement in Support of Karen Day in Washington DC**

The Karen Women's Organization and our 60,000 members support the effort of Karen people in the United States to shed light on the plight of our people and others in Burma. We know that the United States has supported our efforts for gain human rights, democracy and peace in our homeland. We need help again to finish the fragile process begun with elections in 2015. The process is currently stalled, people are being killed and human rights standards violated across Burma.

The Burmese Army has continued to attack innocent ethnic people across the region including the Karen, the Shan, the Kachin in Northern and Southeast Burma and recently the people in the west, particularly the Rohingya. All ethnic rights have consistently been violated in a uniform campaign over decades. The attacks on the Rohingya people are the latest horrific example while other attacks also continue. The Army must be stopped and our rights firmly established. It is only with a federal system and full democracy that lasting peace can be achieved. We cannot pretend to make progress through words while the reality of ethnic cleansing continues across our land.

It is with these challenges in mind that the Karen Women's Organization fully supports the efforts of Karen people in the United States to gain the support of the United States Government for:

1. Fully restored targeted sanctions against the Burmese Government particularly the Burma Army until the peace process including all ethnic groups is complete and;
2. The end of all training of and the selling and shipping of military equipment and equipment which can be converted to military use.
3. Additionally, we ask that the United States Government support refugees and internally displaced people's (IDP) along the Thai- Burma with humanitarian aid. The programs have all been reduced or eliminated in hopes that people can return to Burma in peace. This has not happened and the plight of those unable to return becomes worse everyday. We ask the United States Government to restore funding for refugees and internally displaced people in North and South Eastern Burma as well as supporting those fleeing West.

KWO is a community-based organisation of Karen women working in development and relief in the refugee camps on the Thai border, with IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) and women inside Burma. Since our formation in 1949 we have expanded our focus from one of purely social welfare to try to encourage an awareness of Women's Rights and to promote women's participation in community decision making and political processes.

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