



## **The Nightmare Returns: Karen Hopes for Peace and Stability Dashed by Burma Army's Actions**

Media Release by Karen Peace Support Network  
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A new report and documentary film by the Karen Peace Support Network have been produced to highlight the ongoing plight of the Karen people, who must continue to flee the Burma Army's military operations despite the existence of ceasefire agreements, including the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). The Burma Army's actions and resulting humanitarian crises require urgent action from the government of Burma and the international community.

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, the Burma Army began the largest and most coordinated deployment of troops into Karen State's Mutraw (Hpapun) district since 2008, breaching the terms of the NCA and provoking multiple clashes with the Karen National Liberation Army's (KNLA) 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade. Burma Army soldiers have indiscriminately targeted civilians while more than 2,400 villagers have been forced to flee their land and homes. The majority of those displaced by the Burma Army's current operations had only recently returned to rebuild their villages, farms, and livelihoods following decades attacks by the Burma Army and displacement in the area.

The KNU and Burma Army are both signatories to the 2015 NCA, which prohibits the expansion of military infrastructure and troop reinforcements in ceasefire areas. However, since March 4<sup>th</sup>, at least eight Burma Army battalions have entered Luthaw, without the required prior agreement from the KNLA, and begun constructing a military operations road to connect their military bases. If the road is built, Indigenous Karen villagers may be permanently displaced from their homes and ancestral village territories.

The ceasefire gave people a sense of hope that, perhaps, peace was at hand. The Burma Army's renewed attacks and road construction activities have shattered this hope by once again forcing people from their land and into hiding in the forests.

On April 5<sup>th</sup>, Burma Army troops shot and killed Saw O Moo, father of 7 who was a local villager, a humanitarian worker and Indigenous Karen leader. At the time of his death he was travelling home from a community meeting to coordinate humanitarian assistance for villagers displaced by the Burma Army's military operations.

The Burma Army is taking advantage of the ceasefire to accomplish what it was unable to do during earlier periods of widespread armed conflict: expand and upgrade its military infrastructure and capability to seize and control Indigenous Karen people's lands. The Burma Army's actions undermine local people's efforts to build genuine lasting peace, protect their natural and cultural heritage, and facilitate the return of refugees and IDPs to their ancestral lands.

This report draws on more than two decades of documentation and analysis carried out by KPSN member organizations with the hope that the cries of our people will be heard and listened to, and to help end the nightmare of our people. We would like to see the withdrawal of the Burma Army from our lands. Only then will we be able to have peace.

The Burma Army is able to continue attacking our people because of the impunity and lack of actions against their crimes. All UN members, including members of the United Nations Security Council must support referring Burma to the International Criminal Court for its continuing violations of international law. We also call on international donors to continue delivering humanitarian aid for our Karen refugees and IDPs through cross-border assistance and existing Karen community-based organizations, and reverse cuts in funding which have been made.

We ask governments around the world to pressure Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD-led government to stop blocking the delivery of humanitarian aid and urge the Burma Army to halt its military offensives in all ethnic areas of the country.

The rest of our recommendations can be found in the full report, available at the following link: <https://goo.gl/wrkqXt>

Link to Video Documentary:  
<https://youtu.be/iIN7-aCVuQQ>

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