



“We Want Justice”: Burmese Soldiers Kill Another Villager in Karen State

Statement by Karen Community of Canada

23 July 2020

The Karen Community of Canada condemns the brutal murder of a Karen woman by Burmese soldiers in Karen State last week. On July 16, Naw Mu Naw, age 40, was shot dead in her own home. After killing her, the two soldiers stole the jewellery she was wearing. Naw Mu Naw is survived by her husband Saw Pu Aye and three children aged 18, 15, and 12.

This is at least the third such arbitrary killing in northern Karen State’s Mutraw (Hpapun) District in 2020. The other two cases were a Karen forest ranger on March 5th and community leader Saw Thet Mee on March 31st. In each case, Burmese soldiers shot innocent Karen villagers for no reason.

Killings and other human rights violations are increasing in Karen State despite the so-called Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). The military is using the ceasefire to increase its occupation of Karen lands, putting Karen villagers at increasing risk. In 2020, the military has repeatedly fired heavy artillery near villages, causing injury and destruction of property. As reported by the Karen Peace Support Network, villagers have been deliberately shot at, arbitrarily detained, and tortured. Hundreds of villagers have fled their homes, and thousands more remain at risk.

On Wednesday, July 22, more than 1,500 Karen villagers in the area where Naw Mu Naw was killed demonstrated to demand withdrawal of military bases and justice for villagers who had been killed.

Karen villagers and civil society have consistently called for withdrawal of Burmese military camps near villagers’ homes and lands. All over northern Karen State, these camps and roads make life difficult and dangerous for local villagers. Ongoing Burmese military occupation also makes it impossible for tens of thousands of Karen refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to return to their lands and homes.

Nobody deserves to live like this, year after year, decade after decade.

We call on international governments, including Canada, to strengthen targeted economic sanctions against all companies connected with the Burmese military. As the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission reported, the military finances itself through extensive involvement in Burma’s economy. Anyone who does business with the Burmese military, either directly or indirectly, finances the ongoing murder and destruction of our people who remain in Burma.

We also call on Canada and the international community to prioritize support for ethnic civil society and cross-border humanitarian assistance for IDPs and refugees who remain displaced by ongoing Burmese military violence across the country.

The Karen Community of Canada is an umbrella organization that represents more than 8000 Karen people in Canada and promotes Karen culture, human rights, and democracy.

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