



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Statement on the 2020 Myanmar Election

November 6, 2020

During the November 8 national election, the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) is concerned about the integrity of the election process in both Southeast Myanmar and across the country. In our observations of the electoral process, KHRG has identified various areas of concern that undermine that credibility of a free and fair election occurring in Myanmar. These violations exist in addition to the 2008 Constitution's reservation of legislative power for military appointees, which is already a fundamental violation of popular representation.

In a democratic society, the population must have free access to information in order to make informed decisions about their electoral choices. However, the Government of Myanmar has blocked access to the websites of news media and civil society organizations. Moreover, Covid-19 prevention measures have been used to forbid the work of the Myanmar press, which has been deemed nonessential by the government despite the vital role of the free press in the electoral process.

There are also serious concerns about the lack of transparency with the Union Election Committee (UEC). The body designated to conduct the 2020 election has announced that 53 village-tracts in Southeastern Myanmar, alongside many constituencies from ethnic majority areas across the country, will not be able to participate in the upcoming election. Furthermore, the UEC also initially denied the People's Alliance for Credible Election (PACE), the country's largest independent election monitors, from observing the electoral process. This lack of transparency calls into doubt any political victories that result from the November 8 vote. The UEC has also censored political campaigns from addressing important national issues like land rights and election reform in their one and only opportunity to present their platforms to the national audience on state-controlled media platforms.

KHRG calls into question the validity of these elections and urges the Government of Myanmar to immediately address any violations that may have resulted in disenfranchisement or the silencing of political discourse. The right to political participation must be guaranteed for all the people of Myanmar. Legislative reservations for the Tatmadaw must end immediately in order to allow true democratic representation in federal government. Until these reforms are made, KHRG stands with other civil society actors in condemning this election.

Contact:

Saw Nanda Hsue - +95(0) 977 675 3790

Naw Htoo Htoo - +66 (0) 87-205-1856