



မိန့်ခိုင်းသောအခါ

International Karen Organisation

Asia Pacific Region

European Region

US/Canada Region

Statement by International Karen Organisation

Sunday, 28 February 2021

World Leaders Must Condemn Burmese Army Attacks in Karen State

Ten years ago, today 84,000 Karen civilians petitioned the United Nations Secretary General and other world leaders to take action to stop Burmese Army attacks on Karen people. The petition was delivered to the UN headquarters in USA and to world leaders in 8 countries - the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, Norway, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Canada - calling on them to take effective action to protect ethnic minorities in Burma. The International Karen Organisation repeats this call today as the Burmese Army steps up its attacks and threats in Karen State, forcing 5,400 people to flee their homes.

For more than seven decades, our Karen people have suffered the most horrific human rights violations at the hands of the Burmese military, regardless of the government in power at the time. Hundreds of thousands of our people lost their homes. Some became internally displaced people and some became refugees in neighbouring Thailand. Since the early 1990s, the United Nations repeatedly documented human rights violations against the Karen and other ethnic groups which broke international human rights and humanitarian law, including breaking the Geneva conventions. Human rights violations meeting the definition of war crimes and crimes against humanity as defined by the Rome Statute were documented, but no action taken.

In 2012, the military imposed a peace process under the new political system it had imposed under the 2008 Constitution. Warnings from Karen and other ethnic civil society organisations about the true intentions of the military were ignored by donors, who kept on funding the Burmese military designed peace process even as the Burmese military stepped up attacks against ethnic people and conflict even increased. The military were never seriously interested in democracy and national reconciliation. The military only want to consolidate their rule and protect their economic interests. They used ceasefires with ethnic groups to relax international and domestic pressure and gain access to our lands and resources. They ignored our call for inclusive dialogue to create genuine peace. We want a federal democracy that guarantees our rights and self-determination.

The Karen people continue to suffer serious human rights abuses while the Burmese army enjoy complete impunity. Lack of international action and lack of accountability enabled the Burmese army to commit further crimes against other ethnic minorities such as Kachin, Shan, Arakan and committing genocide against the Rohingya. The Burmese army was so confident that the international community

will take no effective action no matter what crime they commit, that they even went on to stage a coup, arrest civilian leaders and crackdown on peaceful protesters while the world is watching.

The Burmese army has stepped up attacks in Northern Karen State since December 2020, displacing 5,400 Karen civilians. Not one government even bothered to make a statement of concern, let alone take action. The same civilians who asked for international help 10 years ago are under attack again, as they warned they would be. The Burmese military has never left Karen areas. The opposite happened. During the international aid funded Burmese military-imposed peace process more soldiers came to our land. Karen villagers demand the withdrawal of Burmese army troops from our areas.

World leaders must not repeat the past mistake and ignore our call again. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres must come to Burma to deliver a message that the military not only needs to reverse the coup and withdraw from any political role, but also demand Min Aung Hlaing withdraw all his military from ethnic areas. World leaders must pressure the Burmese regime by imposing a global arms embargo and support the referral of Burma to the International Criminal Court.

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