



KWO Statement on International Women's Day

"Choose to Challenge"

March 8, 2021: On International Women's Day, KWO joins women around the world in celebrating the achievements of women and reaffirming our commitment to continue fighting for women's rights and challenging oppression, according to this year's theme.

In our community we have seen some improvement in gender attitudes, more recognition of women's contributions in the community, changes to laws, and increased justice for women. As we recognise these incremental changes, we remain committed to challenging deep-rooted patriarchy and otheroppressive structures and systems. The Burma Army coup on February 1 has only strengthened our resolve to resist.

On top of the challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic, we and other women in conflict affected ethnic areas of Burma are continuing to suffer from ongoing Burma Army attacks, forcing thousands of villagers to flee their homes, as well as damaging foreign investments and mega development projects, which have fuelled conflict and human rights violations. Displacement and destruction of traditional livelihoods are causing increased poverty. At the same time, foreign donors have cut support for refugees and IDPs in Burma's border areas.

As women, we are standing against this ongoing oppression through protests against the military coup, and calls for an end to military dictatorship, abolishment of the 2008 constitution and the building of genuine federalism in Burma.

In our communities, women remain resilient, conducting home visits, providing emergency support to the most vulnerable people during the Covid 19 pandemic, monitoring women and children's situation and making sure they are safe. In conflict areas, fleeing women are caring for their families and continuing to educate their children, even while on the run. At all levels, we are continuing to work for human rights, justice and peace.

We have overcome many challenges including fear, natural disaster, military attacks, and food shortages, and we stand committed to face the current challenges in Burma and long term challenges ahead of us. We urge all women and everyone who wants to see peace and justice in our societies, to join us in resisting structures of oppression. We believe firmly that when we work in solidarity, we have the power to determine our future.

Contact Person:

Karen and English: NawK'nyaw Paw +66810295503

Karen and Burmese: Naw Say Say Heh +66892668573