



## World Refugee Day

June 20, 2021

Today, World Refugee Day, KHRG is calling on the international community and relevant stakeholders to stand for the protection and survival of the 71.7 million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) around the world who have been uprooted from their homes and ancestral lands. Since the military coup on February 1, 2021, there has been a sharp increase of political instability and civil war resulting in the forcible displacement of local ethnic communities and they are in the emergency need of humanitarian support. However, the State Administration Council (SAC) has been ignoring requests for needed humanitarian support for the local ethnic communities who are fleeing from armed conflict. In addition, we have seen that the SAC is blocking access to humanitarian support and destroying humanitarian aid meant for the displaced communities. This is a violation of international humanitarian law.

Due to the increase in political instability and the intensification of hostilities, IDPs and refugees are unable to return to their places of origin in southeast Myanmar. They fear that if they return to their homes their safety would be threatened by the ongoing hostilities in southeast Myanmar; the Tatmadaw's indiscriminate shelling and bombings of villages; landmine contamination; ongoing militarization; political instability; and the risk of abuse by the Tatmadaw, Border Guard Forces (BGFs) and some Ethnic Armed Organizations. Their main concerns are safety, access to land, and loss of livelihood.

In addition to the political instability and civil war in Myanmar, the COVID-19 pandemic has added another layer of insecurity in the already deteriorating human rights and humanitarian crisis. In our recent report *Left Behind* we found that the country's COVID-19 response and support infrastructure collapsed after the military coup.

In order to ensure the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees and IDPs to their places of origin, KHRG recommends the following:

- The international community, including the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly, and ASEAN must strongly pressure the SAC to stop attacking civilian areas, and unarmed civilians.
- Neighboring countries of Myanmar must protect the people fleeing from Myanmar and provide them with security and humanitarian aid.
- SAC must stop the interruption and blockade of humanitarian aid to IDPs and others affected by the conflict.
- SAC must allow stakeholders supporting communities affected the COVID-19 pandemic to operate freely. SAC must also resume the COVID-19 response and support operations.
- The international community must recognize the actors providing humanitarian aid in ethnic areas and must collaborate with and support them.

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