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Military Atrocities and Civilian Resilience:

Testimonies of injustice, insecurity and violence in Southeast Myanmar during the 2021 coup

Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) is pleased to announce the release of its latest report, *Military Atrocities and Civilian Resilience: Testimonies of injustice, insecurity and violence in Southeast Myanmar during the 2021 coup*. This report highlights the serious crimes committed by the Myanmar military and the deteriorating human rights, humanitarian, and human security crisis as a result of the brutal violence inflicted upon civilians in Southeast Myanmar and throughout Myanmar since the military coup in February 2021. This report also presents the hopes and struggles of rural villagers and civilians, demonstrating that, despite the increased insecurity they face, they continue to seek ways to counter a military regime that is illegal and unjust.

Through interviews conducted with rural villagers as well as with participants in the protests and Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), this report exposes the violence that the military-led State Administration Council (SAC) has used against protesters, and the ways in which protesters have vehemently continued to voice their opposition to the coup in the face of increasing brutality and repression by the military. Interviewees recounted stories of fear and insecurity as they encountered the ruthless response of the SAC to their efforts to defend their rights and the future of their country. And yet, they also expressed a strong sense of hope and an unwavering commitment to upholding the fight for federal democracy and freedom from oppression to the very end.

This report also presents the increased insecurity in rural ethnic areas, where the Myanmar military has long used violence against civilian villagers as a key strategy in waging war against ethnic armed actors. This escalation of violence by the Myanmar military has led to the widespread displacement of villagers in Southeast Myanmar. It is estimated that, as of June 23rd, close to 177,000 villagers in Southeast Myanmar, including 50,000 in Karen State, have been displaced since the February 1st coup (with over 140,000 still experiencing displacement as of August 23rd, 2021).

Also explored in this report are the wider impacts of the coup, like the breakdown of the healthcare system since the military coup and the SAC's restrictions on access to information and healthcare services vital to combatting the COVID-19 pandemic.

KHRG hopes this report will allow national and international stakeholders to understand better the impact the military coup has had on ethnic minorities in Southeast Myanmar. Included in the report are several recommendations for national and international stakeholders. These recommendations state how stakeholders can develop and implement policies that limit the power of the SAC; facilitate humanitarian access without working with the SAC; protect human rights; and promote accountability for international crimes.

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