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International Karen Organisation

Asia Pacific Region

European Region

US/Canada Region

Statement by International Karen Organisation

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IKO Condemns Burmese Military Killing of a Baby in Recent Attacks

The International Karen Organisation condemns the killing of a baby and a woman by the Burmese military on 29th January 2022.

We call on the international community to sanction the members of the military who commanded attacks on civilians on 29th and 30th January 2022.

On 29 January 2022 at around 6pm, soldiers from Border Guard Force #1013, which is part of the Burmese military, shelled Htee Law Thee Hta village, Htee Tha Blut Hta village tracts Dweh Loe Township, Mu Traw District in Kawthoolei. Six mortars were fired at the civilian village, killing a three month old baby girl and a 20 year old woman. An additional 3 women and 3 men were injured. More than four homes were damaged.

Border Guard Force #1013 is based in Taung Thone Loe. Kyaw Win, Battalion second-in-command, ordered his battalion to carry out the indiscriminate attack, a violation of the Geneva Conventions and a war crime.

On 30 January 2022, around 7pm, Border Guard Force #2019 and 35 soldiers from Burmese Army Military Operations Command No.8, LIB #408, entered Mae Jit Kee village and fired 20 artillery shells. Two of them struck a village and killed two pigs, and one house was damaged. An elderly woman, Naw Mu Thu, aged 78 years old, was injured. The Burmese Army and the Border Guard Force continued to fire their weapons and shelling artillery for approximately one hour. The village chief was also threatened. These indiscriminate attacks violate the Geneva Conventions and are war crimes.

As with so many of the attacks taking place against civilians in Karen State, we know names and positions of those responsible for these attacks. They must be held accountable for their crimes. Accountability must happen at the local level as well as at the highest level of the military. Ending impunity is one of the most effective ways to prevent further attacks. It is not enough for the IIMM just to collect evidence.

The USA, EU, UK and Canada must sanction Kyaw Win and other local commanders, letting them know that the world knows who they are and what they are doing, and that they will face justice one day. This can contribute to ending their belief they can keep getting away with their crimes. The same must be done for military officers in other states who order attacks against civilians and violating international law.

"We are disappointed that permanent members of the UN Security Council such as the UK, France and USA do not support referring Burma to the International Criminal Court. Russia and China has veto power over UN Security Council resolutions, but this does not stop Security Council members saying they support a referral in principle. They must do so," said Slone Phan, Secretary 1 of the International Karen Organisation.

IKO welcomes the new rounds of sanctions by the USA, UK and Canada, but these are happening too slowly. A year after the attempted military coup, there are still too many international companies helping to fund and arm the Burmese military.

It is also vital that sanctions are imposed on the supply of aviation fuel. Airstrikes are responsible for the majority of internal displacement in Karen state and other ethnic states.

For more information contact:

1. Naw Hsar Khu Wah (UK) +44 7805 342208
2. Slone Phan (Canada) +1 204 229 6613
3. Saw San Lwin (Australia) +61 412 039 426