



## **International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims**

24 March 2022

March 24 is observed as the International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims, marking the day Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero of El Salvador was assassinated on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1980 for denouncing violations of human rights.

The military coup in Myanmar/Burma on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 exacerbated the number and intensity of gross human rights violation across the country. Since the military seized power, civilians have become victims of arbitrary arrest, torture, targeted and indiscriminate killing, airstrikes, shelling and other violent abuses at the hands of the Burma Army. According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, 1,687 civilians have already been killed since the coup, though the number is likely much higher. Across the country, over 800,000 civilians are displaced and living under constant threat to their physical security and mental health<sup>1</sup>. Those who have become victims still await justice, while their perpetrators are yet to be punished and continue to commit further human rights violations. On the other hand, State Administration Council is continuing to commit human rights violation with impunity and there is no accountability from any perpetrator.

In Southeast Burma where armed conflict has been happening for more than seven decades, local communities are subjected to widespread human rights violations, especially by armed actors. The ethnic minorities in Southeast Burma has been systematically targeted and attacked by the Burma Army. According to KHRG's documentation, the majority of the victims of human rights violations or their families have never received remediation for what they have suffered due to the culture of impunity within armed groups, especially within the Burma Army. The Burma Army has been committing forced disappearance, rape, murder, torture, the deliberate destruction of civilian property, and other forms of human rights abuses without facing any repercussions, whereas the victims and families of the victims have had to endure the long-lasting impacts of the abuses.

Since the coup, conflict has escalated again in Southeast Burma and dozens of villagers have been killed by airstrikes, shelling, landmine explosions, and other forms of violent attacks, including while being used as human shields. Civilians have also been systematically used as forced labour by the Burma Army. While accountability for past abuses has not been realised, further abuses are being committed by the Burma Army. KHRG calls upon the international community to take resolute action against the Burma Army, its military-owned businesses, and any entity that works with the Burma Army in an effort in diminish human rights abuses in Burma,

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR. Number of internally displaced in Myanmar doubles, to 800,000. February 11, 2022. [https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1111812#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20internally%20displaced,\(UNHCR\)%20announced%20on%20Friday.](https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1111812#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20internally%20displaced,(UNHCR)%20announced%20on%20Friday.)

end military impunity, restore accountability and justice, and assist victims of gross human rights abuses.

The countless victims of human rights violations and their families deserve and have the right to know the truth, receive justice, and be able to live their lives with dignity. The perpetrators must be held accountable for the violations they have committed during both times of war and peace. It is the responsibilities of all to ensure the right to the truth concerning gross human rights violations and the dignity of victims.

KHRG would like to acknowledge those who have suffered human rights violations and victims who continue to wait for justice. KHRG also pays tribute to those who have suffered or lost their lives while striving to raise awareness to human rights violations in Burma.