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International Karen Organisation

Asia Pacific Region European Region US/Canada Region

Statement by The International Karen Organisation

28 March 2022

3 Airstrikes in Karen State on Armed Forces Day - International Karen Organisation

The International Karen Organisation condemns the Burmese military's airstrikes and heavy artillery strikes in Kawthoolei (Karen State) on Myanmar Armed Forces Day (also known as Burma Revolution Day) on 27th March. The airstrikes took place once in Mutraw and twice in Dooplaya Districts.

On Sunday 27 March 2022, at around 2am, 2 fighter jets from the Burmese military dropped 4 bombs in Day Bu Noh village, Lu Thaw Township, Mutraw District damaging some houses and buildings. This is the same village that faced Burmese military airstrikes on the same day last year, which were the first airstrikes in Karen State in 25 years.

On the same day, the Burmese military conducted 2 rounds of airstrikes in Dooplaya at around 1:30pm and 5:10pm, around Bler Doh village near Thay Baw Boe, in Kawtaree (Kawkareik) Township. The day before, the Burmese military launched airstrikes in Oo Gray Kee area, destroying villagers' houses. The Burmese military is also using heavy artillery and indiscriminately bombing civilian villages in the area, causing more displacement and a humanitarian crisis.

The Burmese military's indiscriminate bombings of civilian targets are violations of international law, constituting war crimes and crimes against humanity, and there must be accountability for their international crimes.

Currently, we estimate there are around 150,000 displaced civilians in Karen State alone and they are in desperate need of food, medicine and shelter. The majority are displaced because of airstrikes or can't return home because of the threat of airstrikes.

We appeal to the international community to provide more humanitarian aid for the displaced civilians and for international NGOs to work with local Karen organisations for aid delivery through cross-border assistance, and to relax unreasonable sourcing and reporting requirements, which are impossible to meet when delivering cross border aid to a conflict zone.

We welcome new sanctions targeting the Burmese air force imposed last week by the UK, USA and Canada. We call on them and the European Union to help stop Burmese military airstrikes by imposing sanctions to stop aviation fuel supplies to Burma. If the jets can't fly, they can't bomb.

We are also calling for sanctions on Burmese companies involved in the supply of aviation fuel to the Burmese military and sanctions to stop international companies being involved in any aspect of the supply of aviation fuel to the Burmese military. Those companies involved in the supply of aviation fuel to the Burmese military are complicit in the bombing of civilians and violations of international law.

We call on the Royal Thai government to stop pushing refugees back to conflict zones in Burma and allow them to stay in Thailand until it is safe for them to return home.

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