



The Voices of Those
Suffered by War

SEPTEMBER 2023 | KACHIN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION THAILAND

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Note of Appreciation

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Summary

This document seeks to reveal the life experiences and inner voices of women survivors from Kachin and Northern Shan States. As human rights violations continue to increase throughout Myanmar over the last decades, it aims to document the true lived stories of survivors and their voices in order to obtain justice in the future, and to help their cases to be utilized in the process of transitional justice.

This document reveals the voices of 20 women survivors, all identified through pseudonyms, with additional cases included. The information was gathered by staff from KWAT through face-to-face interviews. The lives of women survivors are complex and challenging, and they are facing many difficulties in terms of access to education, health and livelihood opportunities.

Often, the challenges they face are the source of discriminatory attitudes from fellow community members, and they suffer social isolation and prejudice. The women are also faced by the immense challenge of accessing justice, as perpetrators of gender-based violence are able to commit their crimes without impunity, leading to further danger and threats to the women survivors. Survivors are facing mental and physical; health problems due to trauma, including disabilities and long-term health problems. KWAT request the relevant authorities to take care of the needs of the survivors and the international community to participate.

The life experiences of **20 Kachin women survivors**





Ah Bawk

Ah Bawk lived at xxxx town in Muse district and in 2011, she married with Ah Ze. After marriage, she prepared to become a teacher at religious-based school (SJNI) and she attended a refresher course in 2015-2016 academic year and she worked as a teacher from 2016 to 2021 for 6 years. During that period, they had three sons.

Around 2020, it was pandemic of COVID and the COVID infection at XXX town in Muse district was quite severe. She and her family also faced severe COVID infection and deteriorating health in 2021. At that time due to military coup, many civil servants of the health department joined the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and there was also shortage of medicine. She and her family members had to buy medicines from outside shops and administer them at home. xxxxx city is an area where the Burmese army is stationed and where other armed organizations are located, so it is an unsafe area for the public and there is a risk of having armed clashes at any time.

In addition, it is close to the border area with China and there are casinos owned by Chinese businessmen nearby, so the commodity prices in the area are very high for ordinary people to survive for living. With her small school teacher salary, she had to survive. On October 20, 2021, a heavy weapon fired by the Burmese army at the civil area without specific target, and it hit her house. She sustained an injury in her chest while she was suffering COVID-19.

“As I was sick and getting treatment at home, a motor shell dropped in our compound and shrapnel hit my chest. The blood came out from my nose and mouth and I considered that we were now get into the darkest period of life. However, my children also saw the blood from my wounds and cried, and I made up my mind not to give up my life and resisted my pain.”

As soon as I was injured, I got to the hospital at XXXX town. As my wound was serious, I was transferred to Mandalay people’s hospital to receive Oxygen. But it was difficult to get treatment there and I had to move to a private hospital. I had to borrow money to get treatment there. When the chest X-ray result came, I realized there was a piece of shrapnel in my lungs. Though I was treated, hospital could not take out the piece of shrapnel.

Though the doctor told me that everything had been removed to make me happy, I saw it again when I took an X-ray when I got sick again. I am currently taking traditional medicine to reduce the pain of my injury. I can’t usually do manual labor and I feel tiredness. When the weather is cold, I feel aches and pains.

Due to my health, I had to stop my career as a school teacher in 2021. I feel tired when I talk for a long time. To find a job for living, there are only hard labor jobs available and I face huge difficulty. For being a survivor, “I was said that I was unlucky and I faced that kind of Karma. I would like to request to people that instead of blaming people, people should help in the process of reparation, justice, and truth for those who had painfully suffered.” “In 2022, I participated in the mental reparation and open mind sessions for survivors conducted by the trainers from KWAT and I was able to heal my mental trauma.” Now, I need a job that gives me income for daily

living for my family. I am facing difficulty in starting a business but I need investment money. Now, I started to work in 2022 as a secretary at a women's survivor team to give support to other survivors. Our Women's Survivors Team is committed to helping survivors who are going through the same struggles as we are, listening to their voices and exchanging their feelings.

We do not want armed organizations at the places where the people are. I don't want fighting anymore. When there is a battle, we, the people are to feel the pain first. I would also like to request that reparation for survivors be given constant consideration during the transitional period from now on. The impunity for violators of the government and the Burmese military is the reason for repeated violations. Therefore, I would like to tell the international community that the perpetrators must be punished. On the other hand, it is difficult to rehabilitate our lives. When we are talking about reparation, the support for both mental and physical rehabilitations are needed.

Ah Nan

"My name is Ah Nan. I used to live at XXX village, XXXX town, Muse District in northern Shan State. I have 9 siblings and our family were farmers, and we moved to work our own farm for our security and livelihood. So, I used to feel depressed. When I got to the right age, I married Ma Gam from xxxx village, xxx Town in Muse District. We had 6 children. If there were no war, we could work hard for our living and it is enough for our family. In our family, we could rely on my husband.

But, unfortunately a Burmese military column from (99) Division came into our village on the morning of May 7, 2013, while our family is still asleep. The village head from our village together with the village administrator and soldiers asked my husband to show the routes. After they took my husband at around 2 pm. I heard the sound of a gunshot.



That gunshot sound came from where they killed my husband. As soon as we heard that my husband was killed, I myself, my son, and daughters, all of us cried. At that time, my youngest child was still under breastfeeding. The bullet shot at my husband pierced from the back and came out from the stomach. He died with that wound.

I feel lost thinking how could I feed my children and the family as I was alone when my husband was killed.

I pity my children. When they are grown up, they have no one to call as father. Even though I was feeling sad, I had to start doing hard work in the areas to feed my children.

It is not easy for me taking care of the whole family alone after my husband was killed. Now, I have to struggle to feed and care for all my (6) children. I cannot take rest, as we have to rely on the income day by day for living; I have to do casual work. We have to do our living for the family by earning 8,000 Myanmar Kyat a day.

The act of Burmese army taking my husband to supposedly show them local routes, and then killing him was very inhumane and cruel.

After the incident of my husband, my health deteriorated. Especially, I got the heart problem. Now, when I hear loud noises, my heart beats fast and I feel tired. I am overwhelming with fear. In 2014, there were fighting at the villages in Mongko township and our family had to flee from our home at xxx village, xxx town in Muse district, we became a displaced person who came without carrying any goods, just to escape fighting. At the internal displaced person camp, we had to live safely with other people's support. As there were no job opportunities, I could not send my children to school. Since 2018, other people went back as it was said we could go back. But, we were worried for security and we didn't dare to go home. We requested a place in Muse district to stay until now. As we don't have farm for living, I am happy to stay together with all my family.

One thing I worry about is that due to political and economic difficulties, young people are unemployed and ruined, so I am very worried that my children will also be lost and ruined. I have never been so unhappy and unable to overcome

anything in my life. Sometimes I feel like I want to commit suicide. But now I have the opportunity to heal my mental trauma. The responsible people from KWAT came to meet me and encouraged and supported me in various ways to help me recover mentally. Now, I can meet with women survivors who had similar human rights violations to me and exchange experiences and feelings. The current place where our family lives is not very safe. Burmese army troops come anytime, entering into village, catching and eating chickens, and asking for firewood. If the situation is not very good, I am always worried and afraid.

We don't want the soldiers to make military base in the villages where our people are living or staying at the places where people are present. I want them to go out immediately. I don't want any fighting. We want survivors like us not to be marginalized, but to help and support them so that they can rebuild their lives. I don't want anyone to experience the kind of incident we experienced, So, in order to achieve truth and justice, I would like to urge that the perpetrators receive punishment."

Ah Tum

"I am Ah Tum I live at xxx village, xxxxx town in Muse district. I have (5) siblings. When I was a child, I was very happy because I had the opportunity to live and grow up with a perfect family with loving parents. From the age of 11 to 23, I grew up working and living in my relative's house. I had to work all the time. It was even difficult to meet with neighboring friends.

When I was 25, I married my boyfriend from XXX town in Muse district. After getting married, I went to stay with the family of my husband. We had 4 children. Our family lived as farmers. My husband is the one who provides the income for the family. I take care of household work and taking care of our sons and daughters.

On November 17, 2016, there was an armed battle started between Burmese army and an ethnic armed revolutionary group at xxx village, xxxx town in Muse district. Our whole family needed to urgently move to the China border as the Burmese army carried out an airstrike on xxxx village, xxx township in Muse district. But my father-in-law Zaw Zaw was left at home as he was sick. We could not go back home as fighting were serious. After about a month, the fighting ceased and there was no sound of gunfire, my husband went back alone from the China border to our home to check the situation.

My husband told me that he went back to xxxx town full of fear. When he went into the compound of our house, the door of our house was open. So, he ran into the house and shouted “father”, “father” first. But there was no response from his father. The whole compound was quiet and he just heard only his voice. He again shouted “father”, “father”. He searched the whole house. But he couldn’t find his father. He ran around the compound searching for his father but he couldn’t find him. Finally, He went on the road east of our house leading to the farm. There, he found his father’s body tortured into pieces. The body was with the clothes he was wearing when he was left at home. His head and his body were separated with the hands tied in his back. My husband found the body of his dead father.

It was December 4, 2016, when my husband found his father killed. My husband then buried the body of his father and came back to the Chinese border town. Six years after the incident, people said we the displaced people could go home, and we went back home. We could hold prayer meeting for my father-in-law only when we got back to our home.

Because of fighting, our family had lost not only my father-in-law but also our means of living and we had to start everything from the beginning.

In addition, as there was no clearing the landmines put by armed groups, my husband stepped on a landmine while he was finding firewood on the mountain and he suffered a big wound in his right leg. Due to this incident, he was taken to the hospital in Mangshi, Yunnan Province in China for treatment. He was treated for a long time. Until now, a steel rod is in his leg. He has to buy and take medicinal plant roots related to bones and tendon health. After that incident, my husband could not do hard manual work. So, I had to take care of the work for the living of my family as well as household works. I have more burdens. I have to shoulder the burden of

the education of my children, my family's health matters, and all the social and emotional labor.

When I was young, I lived at my relative's house and was always scolded, so I grew up with a lot of fear. Because of this war, a family member was brutally killed, and the man I loved was injured again due to the consequences of the war, so still my mind is always filled with fear. When I am at home, I am always checking both in front of and behind the house. My mind is always full of fear. When I hear a loud noise, I feel tired, dizzy, and uncomfortable. These traumas hurt the health of my heart. I feel that there is no improvement in my life.

I would like to reveal my feelings to others. But I didn't dare to tell people concerning for the security. While this was going on, KWAT visited the families of our survivors and listened to our voices and

feelings. When we first met, I was very afraid to share my story. Those who came to see me also came to meet me many times and encouraged me. They also contributed some money for my husband's medical expenses. After that, I myself had the opportunity to join a women's survivor group, and my consciousness was opened up. I was able to share what I had experienced by participating in a women's survivor exchange program. I also learned about the situations of other women who survived. I also received mental strength from them. It is very beneficial for us to have a place where these survivors can meet each other. We can also open up about our feelings, and I trust the survivor sisters even more than my relatives. I dare to talk more.

It is very difficult for married women like me to lead a family in our Kachin society, where only men are the heads of a married family. It is very important for us to learn how to do some kind of income-generating business. If there is a war, the only those who suffer are the people, so we don't want wars to happen. I would like to request the Burmese government not to deploy troops in places where there are people. We are the survivors of human rights violations and survivors of war crimes. We need justice. Therefore, the international community needs to pay attention and support.

I want and wish genuine peace and I want to live without fear.



Lu Lu

My name is Lu Lu. I live at xxx village, xxx township in Muse district. I have 10 siblings. As far as I remember my childhood, my aunt (my mother's elder sister) begged my parents to adopt me because she had no sons or daughters. So, when I was 10 years old, I moved to the xxx village, xxxx township in Muse District, where my aunt's family lived.

From the year I reached to my adopted mother's (aunt's) house, I was sick as I missed my father, mother, and siblings. I missed home too much, but I didn't inform my adoptive mother (aunt) that I wanted to come home; my father and mother, I missed my siblings and I was sick for a whole year. Because I miss home too much, I finally did not inform my aunt and I ran on foot alone from xxx village to the village where my parents live. I left the house early morning and had to walk the whole day and I reached my home in the dark. Since then, my parents stopped sending me to my aunt.

We live in the village and I had a chance to attend the school. But I could join until I reached 6th grade. When I finished sixth grade, I was 17 years old. It was very happy during my childhood life as there were a lot of members at home. In 2000 when I was (17), my parents arranged a wedding with Aung Aung when I was 17. After the marriage, we got one son and one daughter. Our family lives on working at moving farms and paddy fields. In my family, our living depends on my husband. For me, I have to take responsibility for taking care of children and the household.

On November 17, 2016, there was an armed battle started between Burmese army and ethnic armed revolutionary group at xxx village, xxxx town in Muse district. Our whole family need to urgently move to the China border as Burmese army launched an airstrike on xxxx village, xxx township in Muse district and people from the area including our family had to run and hide at a place on the China border. At that time, it was not very difficult to cross the border and they could run to the China site. The displaced people would have faced very difficult situation if they faced the situation during COVID pandemic, closing the border gates and not allowing to enter or exit China.

About 10 days after we had fled, Burmese army troops stole and seized all the valuables at the houses in the villages of our area. They killed and ate the cows, chickens, pigs, and buffaloes and burned the houses. Our house was also burned. Our house was

set on fire. We could clearly see the burning. That day, I couldn't keep my feeling of being lost. So, I cried out loud. It was a big house where we lived our whole lives. We had to try very hard and it was very difficult to build such a big house. It's really not easy to build it again. As being at the border area, the commodity prices are high and we have to struggle for our living. Later, as we didn't have house to live in, we could build a little house with the help of the different organizations.

While we were suffering from the physical difficulties and mental trauma of having our house burnt down while fleeing the war, one of the difficulties that continued to increase the burden on my heart was that my husband stepped on a land mine and lost his leg.

It was in 2018, my husband stepped on a landmine while gathering firewood in the forest and seriously injured his left leg. My husband was injured and managed to be taken to the Mangshi Hospital in China in time for treatment, but in the end, he lost his leg. We had faced financial crisis as he was treated in hospital for about one month. However, we got some financial and moral

support from individuals as well as from organizations during the treatment in the hospital. After he lost one of his legs, he could not find income for the family. My sons and daughters even felt sick due to fear when the incident happened. They still are suffering mental traumas. I can see them living in worry and fear. Currently, my husband is unable to work because he has only one leg, so I am the only one who manages the affairs of the family. At the moment, I run a small shop. Our family is relying on me selling things at this shop for our living.

I started to participate the exchange program of women survivors, run by KWAT in 2021. In this exchange program, I had a chance to meet with other women survivors who suffered similarly to me. I had a chance to learn about their experience and conditions as well as I got strength and encouragement from them. It is a very good program letting to meet women survivors each other. It is also a crucial program. Then, we need justice. I want international community to support us, the women survivors, to get justice.

Because of the war, my happiness in life and everything were destroyed. I used to cry and feel depressed, thinking about how could I rebuild my life. I don't want fighting to continue. I don't want others to be or suffer like me. I wish to have genuine peace. I want to have a chance to talk freely without fear. I need someone who seriously listens to our feelings. I would like to urge all parties concerned to help rebuild our lives.



Ah Lyan

I am Ah Lyan. I live in xxx village, xxx township in Muse district. Our family work in paddy field, planting corn and sugarcane for our family business. In our family, my husband takes care of managing the family businesses and I take care of household work and take care of our two children. Our family used to live happily. But our happiness was destroyed on July 28, 2013. As that day was Sunday, my husband and elder son went to the church. I stayed home with the younger son as he was not well. Our paddy field was situated near the church. On that day, as the church service had not yet started and I learned that he left my son at the church and went to see our paddy field. Not long after my husband and son left home, I heard some sounds of gunshots. I was worried and I called my husband but there was no response. What happened was that he left the phone at the church and my son was too young to answer the phone.

In the evening of that day after the church service, friends brought back my son home. I learned what happened only when my son returned home. On that night, my husband didn't come back home. On the morning of the next day, friends told me that Burmese army column took my husband. I also tried to find him but could not. On the same day, I saw the military column coming back to our village and I tried to ask the soldiers. I saw an officer riding the motorbike that my husband used. In the next few days, my family and relatives helped to find him. After two days, I found my husband dead with gunshot wounds and other injuries that indicated torture.

So, I was very sad and mourning. When I felt alone and marginalized, some people blamed me. They said "She is happy as she has no husband. Her husband died of Karma that returned to him", some people laughed at me. At that time, on one hand, I had to solve the problems of my family's livelihood and on the other hand, I needed to support my sister-in-law, who was attending college. I felt very tired both physically and mentally. I felt like I had no more energy left to overcome these difficulties. I had to do daily labour to feed my family day to day. We were very enthusiastic to support our two children to become educated people. Now, that my husband has passed away, I cannot afford it. Our family's sweet dreams are broken and destroyed.

Now, I am worried for my elder son that he cannot go to school and he is losing his focus and his behavior is changing. I have to do casual labour to get enough income to support our family's livelihood. I also sell produce at my grocery store. I have to struggle alone with my mental trauma with no one to help me.

One day, KWAT came to meet me and introduced me to mental support. Then, the supporters from KWAT invited me to meet with other women survivors. Previously, I felt like it was only me facing such a tragedy and I sobbed alone. Now, I could meet with other women survivors and I felt like my energy was revitalized, and I can also understand other people with empathy. Now, we the women survivors have become leaders ourselves.

As a woman survivor, I would like to ask the relevant authorities to take responsibility for those whose human rights were violated. At least, I will be satisfied if the military confesses that the crimes were committed by them. Now, they don't confess to their crimes, and they even blame us who were violated.

***I don't want the fighting to continue.
Everywhere there are fighting, there are
many human rights violations happening.
I don't want anyone to suffer like us."***

Ma Kai

My name is Ma Kai. I live in xxx village, xxx township in Muse district. I married with Ah Sai from xxx village and now we live in xxx village in xxx township. We have 5 sons and daughters. Our family's main business is growing rice and plantation of corn. In my family, my husband took the position of head of the household and I was responsible for education and health of our sons and daughters as well as other household works.

When my husband was an administrator of 10 households at xxx village in xxx township, Burmese army troops entered our xxx village and there was an armed clash with an ethnic armed revolutionary group, Kachin Independence Organization (KIO). The villagers fled to xxx village church. At that time, soldiers asked who was the administrator of 10 households to the villagers and finally they arrested and took my husband. The incidents that happened after they arrested and took my husband were very sorrowful.



According to my husband who told me later, soldiers arrested and brought him and tortured him by beating his chest and back with guns. Then, he was tied to a tree down to our village. On the next day morning, he was taken from xxxx village to xxxx town. He was in too much pain with the injuries of beating, he said he could not eat though they give him a meal. He was detained at xxx town for three days and later he was released. His health deteriorated after the incident due to the impact of this torture. The health of his heart was also impacted. My mind was overwhelmed with fear always worried. The reason for the abduction of my husband was an allegation that he had a connection with the Kachin Ethnic Armed Revolutionary Organization (KIA). It is not really fair that they accused people as they like and torture inhumanely. After these incidents, our family had to take refuge at a displaced persons camp at the China border. While staying in the camp from 2016 to until now 202, the assistance became reduced. Later the aid became nearly nothing at all. It was very difficult for my family. My husband cannot do the hard work like before due to the impact of torture, I alone have to get income for the family's livelihood.

In our China-Myanmar border area, until 2019, the entry and exit roads of the Chinese border were open. So, we were able to trade with China and we were able to operate family businesses. However, since 2019, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, China closed the border trade and all the border gates. So, it was very difficult for people to

cross the border. We faced a tighter economy. So I had to do casual labour in the area to support my family. Due to COVID, schools were closed and we were worrying for the education of the children. At the time when children were unable to go back to school, and the economy was still very tight, the military attempted to seize power again on February 1, 2021. After the coup d'état, the military began setting up military camps in schools, so I was once again worried about the safety of my children going to school.

No matter how difficult the economic situation is, I wanted my children to be educated. So, I sent them to a place where there was a school, even though they were far away from the family so that they could continue their education. I can't be depressed in this situation. At the same time, I myself always have to support my husband to heal from his trauma.

When I got a chance to participate in a program to meet with other women survivors like us, I was happy. We who have similar lives, feelings, and difficulties, we encouraged each other. We regained our mental strength to continue to stand and to live. It is very helpful to create a program for survivors to listen to each other's voices.

I want to live peacefully in my life. But there were fighting going on at any time, and we are hearing only the sounds of gunfire. Until this day, we have to live in insecurity. I don't want wars anymore. I am praying for the region without war and for the country peaceful.

If there is a war, the military targets civilians, carries out unfair arrests and tortures them as they like. I would like to ask the relevant authorities of the country to prevent and protect these things.

Torture makes a person's life lost even though he or she is barely alive. That kind of unfairness should not be allowed. I would like to request the international community to give their full support in order to take action against serious human rights violations in Myanmar.



Ma Kaw

My name is Ma Kaw. I and Ah Brang got married in 2005. At that time, our family lived in northern Shan State. In 2006 after having our first child, we moved to xxx village, xxx township in Kachin State. Later we got one more son and a daughter. At these times, the health of my husband was very good with nearly no sickness. The whole year he might get a cold one time. My husband led the family and he tried to feed our family well. Our family are farmers and moved to our own farm for our livelihood. My husband also does casual labour, I had to take care of three children so I couldn't do other work.

In 2011, as the fighting started to break out at xxx village, xxxx township in Kachin State, where we lived, between Kachin ethnic armed organization (KIA) and the Burmese army, and the villagers including our family have to flee to xxx town. We all took refuge at xxx village, xxxx township in Kachin State.

When we started to flee from the village, we couldn't bring anything. All our five family members fled to escape from fighting only with an old motorbike. It was not easy to rebuild our family during the period of being internally displaced persons. After one year of being Internally Displaced People (IDP), in 2021, my husband started to go out of the camp to work for some income for the expenses for the schooling for the children and living for the family. The job was taking cows from xxx village, xxx township in Kachin State to the China border. During his work, while he was taking rest at a farm in xxxx village, Burmese soldiers from LB (37) and militia troops questioned and arrested him. They accused my husband as a soldier from KIA and brutally tortured him. Finally, they charged him with illegal organization act article 17/1 and put him in jail for three years. He was released on December 28, 2015. Though he was released, he had lots of traumas. His heart was not in normal health.

In 2015, I had a chance to attend a workshop for women survivors organized by KWAT. Started from 2016, I received some funds from KWAT for women survivors to start small scale vocational businesses. With this fund, my husband could set up a barber shop. He has been working at that shop for 8 years now. When there was COVID pandemic, in my family some people got sick. At that time, my husband's barber shop also had to be closed. As the business finding us income stopped, our family faced difficulties in living.

On January 19, 2018, we five women survivors together formed a women's survivor group so that women's survivors could meet each other. I took responsibility for documentation and collecting photos of this small group. Five of us meet every month. We started to collect 2000 kyat from each to help those who faced human rights violations and started to help as much as we can. For joining that group, I could learn many knowledge, handicraft skills and knowledge on human rights. We also had chance to make excursions and we can relax our mind and feel strengthened. We could also learn how to communicate with people.

In 2020, our family was infected with COVID and suffered a great deal, coming close to death. As we didn't have job and income, we had to borrow money for the treatment. After the military coup on February 1, 2021, our children had to stop going school for two years. After the coup, the assistance to IDPs was nearly stopped and the economy of the family became more challenging. My husband can't do manual labor, Sometimes I get sick, so I have to borrow the money I need.

We haven't gone back home for 11 years. We want to go back to our village. But we don't want to go back without clearing the landmines which were planted by both sides of the conflict. So, we are afraid to go back to the village. In the compound of the village Church, there are still mortar shells that were launched during fighting. For the people who are going home, we need to build the houses ourselves, but my husband cannot do hard work and we cannot afford to pay others to build the house for us. I feel like we are walking on a dark road. As the political situation is bad, there are more human rights violations. So, I want to get genuine peace quickly.

When the country is at peace, I don't want those who have had their human rights violated, to be forgotten. There should be support for treatment of mental trauma, training vocational education, and reparation. The perpetrators should also confess their wrongdoings, and they should receive the punishment they deserve. I would like to ask international community to continue to support IDPs who are facing hardships due to civil war. Assistance should be sent directly to ethnic areas where the assistance is needed. Then, they should support the Economy, development and education of Myanmar.



Ah Pri

I am Ah Pri. Before I was getting married, I lived with my parents at xxx village, xxx township in Kachin State. The fighting started to break out in June 2011 and I sent my younger sisters and grandparents to an IDP camp at XXXX town. At the time, my mother opened a shop at xxx village and me, my father and mother stayed at the village. In February 2012, soldiers came to our house and interrogated my father frequently on his connection to the KIA, therefore we moved to IDP camp at xxxx town from our xxx village with only one set of clothes. While we were in IDP, militia and soldiers dug trenches in our house and camped for two years after setting up a checkpoint. Some of our family members moved to xxxx town in 2011 and in 2012 some of us moved to xxxx town and we were separated for about four years.

In 2014, our grandpa who was at the IDP camp in Xxxx village in xxx township, was sick and I, and my parents moved to that IDP camp. Grandpa passed away in 2015. Also in 2015, my boyfriend and I get married at IDP camp in xxx village in xxx town. In 2016, we got one daughter. I started to work as a teacher at government school in 2017. My husband opened a keyboard training class in the Summers. He also played keyboard in stage shows for the living of the family. When I was a teacher, he sent and took back the children to and from the school.

My father passed away in 2021 after getting sick. On October 23, 2022, was the darkest time of my life. While my husband was playing keyboard at the stage show commemorating the 62nd anniversary of Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) at xxx village in xxx township, the Burmese military had launched airstrike bombing at the stage show and he died on the spot. As my husband passed away suddenly, I was trying to get through these darkest times by praying to God for encouragement. I had to transfer my eldest daughter from the school where her father put her, to Pran Wan school run by the church.

As a new couple, we had overcome many difficulties together, but what happened to him made me feel very sad. Since the military coup in 2021, I joined the CDM movement as a government employed school teacher, so it was very difficult for me to work the same time while taking care of my two children. I will move on with my life with my children. We want to give my best support to children's education and health. As my two children are still young, I cannot go far away to find money. I want to get a job where I can work from home.

While we were IDPs, we lost three persons; my grandpa, my father, and my husband. I don't want anybody to get experience like this. I want those who did the wrongdoings to get punished. I want Myanmar to have peace.



Ah Roi

I am Ah Roi and live at xxx village, xxxx township in Kachin State. I married with Ah Dut and we have 3 children. My husband takes care of his parents and he is also a dutiful head of the household. He treated his family with love and warmth, he treated his sons and daughter without discrimination based on their gender and he was also an active participant in community social issues. In 2011, our happy family had to flee from our village due to a renewed war in Kachin State. And, we had to take refuge at a refugee camp at xxx village in xxxx township. This was the first time we had experienced to run away from war. We thought we had to leave from the village for a while and we could go home soon. So, we didn't take any goods. We ran away with only our own set of clothes. At the village, we ran a grocery store. We had to leave all the things at the store.

While we were living in a refugee camp on June 17, 2012, the police unexpectedly came and arrested my husband. They tortured my husband inhumanly and brutally, and he was charged and imprisoned with article 17/1. After being released from prison, my husband was traumatized and became very short-tempered. He showed no warmth in the family. His health is not as good as it used to be, so he can't work like he used to.

While my husband was working as farm guard at xxx village, xxx township in Kachin State, he was infected with COVID 19 and got sick. At the same time, I myself and children were also sick with COVID. To prevent the spread of COVID 19, the entry and exit of the camp was restricted, so I could not go and take care of my husband. When I was sick, I was unable to buy the food I wanted to eat due to financial difficulties. Now I can't work anymore and I can't earn. We faced difficulties in accessing healthcare and daily living as well as delays in the education of the children. We, the grassroots people, even though we don't like the education of the military council, we cannot send our children to other school and we had to send our children to the school run by military council when they were opened. I and my husband have to do casual labour in the region. But it is difficult for us as there is always additional costs for his medical treatment.

My husband has an internal injury which needs monthly treatment, otherwise, he feels sick and irritated, his blood vessels become

expanded and face is swollen. He has to take vitamins and painkillers. My husband always said, "If it didn't happen to me, I can earn enough to feed you and children. Now, it happened to me and I can't find enough money to treat myself," he frequently told me, while he is crying. I have to encourage him.

When my husband was arrested, I was very scared. I have never seen or heard of innocent people arrested, so I just kept crying. At that time, my friends even thought I was crazy. When this happened to my husband, while I was sitting at home crying, a church pastor came to me and encourage me. He prayed for me. After that, I had a chance to participated in the human rights and women rights training in the camp. In the camp, I participated in activities needed as much as I could. KWAT provided me with psychological reparation, handy craft skills and study trips to other countries.

Since then, I led to organize to form Kasi Kaja women's group aiming to reveal the feelings and experiences of the women survivors. The aim of the Kasi Kaja organization is to encourage women survivors and family members, to open up and address their feelings with each other and to join together in bringing justice. When Kasi Kaja group was formed, we collected 2000 kyats each from 5 members to organize counselling program for new survivors. Now, we are meeting new women survivors, listening to their voices, helping and supporting the families of survivors by creating income generating handicraft businesses and skills. It is a time when the government is

preparing for our IDPs to return to our homes. In order for us to return well, the government needs to work to create a safe environment for the people.

When we are going back home from the IDP camp, we will hold the hands of the people who faced human rights violations like us and we will counsel them and encourage them. We need a place for survivors to meet. We also are planning to do data collection on the incidents of human rights violations.

It is needed for the perpetrators to be punished legally and there should be reparation programs for those who had their human rights violated.

I want the international community to put pressure on the Myanmar military government not to torture innocent people, and to see that criminal activities are properly punished. I also want to get freedom of speech as a person who faced human rights violations. I want my country have genuine peace.



Ah Hkawn

I am Ah Hkawn. When I was young, I live at xxx village, xxx township in Kachin State. We have 3 siblings. One brother and two sisters. Our family mainly live on growing rice in the paddy and working on our farm. In my life, almost every day has been without peace. We have always had to struggle to survive in the armed conflicts.

Around 1980, there was fighting between the Burmese army and Kachin Independent Army (KIA). The Burmese army burnt down the villages and forced people to work as porters and our family had to move to xxx village in xxx township in Kachin State. While we were living at xxx village in 1989, the Burmese army arrested and took all the villagers to a military camp in Jañ Bu village. I was one of those arrested. At that time, I was a teenager.

Among the arrestees, all the men including my father were tortured and questioned by the soldiers. I heard they interrogated and killed a villager. At that time, we all felt nervous and insecure. The Burmese soldiers heard that there were guns in our village, so they arrested the villagers and threatened to release them only if they were given a gun from within the village. So, my father found a hunting gun from the village and gave it to the soldiers so that all the villagers were released. It was an exchange of a gun for the lives of all the villagers. As there were many armed clashes around the village, I could only finish the third standard at school.

In 1991, I married with and lived at xxx village, xxxx township in Kachin State. We had 4 sons and 3 daughters. The year that I got married, Burmese soldiers arrested and detained my brother-in-law at Light Infantry Battalion 321, Shwe Nyaung Pin military base. The battalion commander at the time was Captain Thaung Lwin. When my brother-in-law heard, they were planning to kill him, a Karen Christian soldier helped him to run away. When he escaped, they arrested our family as hostage. At that time, I was eight months pregnant. Soldiers put my legs in wooden stock. They threatened me putting the tip of the knife at my foot and chin. I was released after I explained them that I was from xxx village and I married at xxx village and I didn't know about my brother in-law, etc.

In 2011, fighting recurrence in Kachin State and we had to take refuge hiding from war at IDP camp at xxx village, xxx township in

Kachin State. As the economy of our family became very tight, I took a trip to help selling other people's cows at the border. During that trip, I ran into the fighting between Kachin ethnic armed revolutionary group, KIA, and the Burmese army.

I sustained injury in my hand from the fighting, and my hand was amputated, and so I became a person with disabilities. I can no longer support my family well, losing my hand gave me a lot of limitations.

After the loss of one hand, I can't do manual labor including working at the moving farm anymore. I couldn't earn money and we had to solve for our family's living with the income of our sons and daughters. My sons and daughters had to work very hard for their education, to access healthcare and income, I feel sorry for them. I also feel I am a useless person. In our Kachin tradition, when a person dies, two thumbs of the dead body are usually tied with white thread. At that time, I won't have a thumb to tie as one of my hands was gone. I worry that when the time comes, my sons and daughters will lose the face in front of others.

During the darkest time of my life, I was invited by KWAT to join the exchange program for persons whose human rights were abused. I felt relieved when I realized that people who are having such feelings was not me alone, after I had a chance to join the program for women survivors to meet each other. In the whole program, besides mental support and human rights awareness training, I had a chance to learn handicraft making skills as vocational training. I could take care of myself more due to the exchange program for women survivors. I got strength to go on.

Now, as a member of Kasi Kaja, women survivors' group from Kachin State, I joined together with other members to encourage and help other people who faced human rights abuses. For us those who faced human rights abuses should get truth and justice. To prevent similar abuses, people who faced human rights abuses should reveal their stories to others including international community, so that they can understand the situation in Kachin state. I want those who perpetrated the human rights abuses to confess and take responsibility. I don't want to live in fear. I want to live with freedom.

Rebecca

My name is Rebecca. Our family lives xxx village, xxx township in Kachin State. I have 3 siblings. My mother passed away when my younger sister was 1 year old. When my mother died, my father left home and only three of us were left. Later, we had to move to stay at our Grandma's house, where we grew up. I am, government employed teacher. I was married and I have a child.

In 2013, my younger sister Maran Lu Ra had joined the 10 standard exam and she joined as a volunteer in the church literature religion program of the Kachin Baptist Convention to Hkinduyang village, Sumprabum township in Putao district in Kachin State. She was assigned as a volunteer teacher at the Kachin Baptist Church school at Kaungkha village, Mongpaw, Muse township in northern Shan State in 2014.

While she was working as a volunteer teacher at Kaungkha village, on January 19, 2015, my sister Maran Lu Ra together with her colleague Sarama Hkawn Nan Tsin were brutally raped and killed by Burmese soldiers. I was very sad when I heard about her. I could not sleep nor eat. I had to steel myself not to collapse when her body reached Myitkyina. To have strength, I had to pray to God.

*Now, me and my siblings can never meet again,
and I felt very bitter and resentful of the inhuman
torture inflicted on my sister by the Burmese army.
There has not yet been the justice for my sister.
There should not be impunity for the army. There
should be punishment. It took a long time for me to
heal after the incident of my sister.*

I had a chance to participate in the exchange of women survivor program organized by KWAT in 2018. Five women participants in that program, including myself, formed a women survivor group called Kasi Kaja. After forming Kasi Kaja, as a member, I could join and learn handicraft-making skills as well as training and discussion on political education, human rights, women's rights, transitional justice law international human rights law. Now, I am taking the

position of secretary of Kasi Kaja. I am also working with the skills I learned in handicrafts to get income. As the capital is small, it is limited to have more income flow.

In July 2021, I suffered a serious health problem. Especially, I got ascites, hepatitis, and jaundice which caused me to experience a miscarriage. It was very difficult for me to even get treatment. I am the one who has to support my family's living needs with my small employee's salary. I joined the CDM movement of civil servants who opposed the military coup on February 1, 2021. As I joined CDM movement, I lost my job and I stopped working as a teacher. As the political situation escalated, the living conditions became worse. I want the truth and justice about the rape and murder of two volunteer teachers, my sister Maran Lu Ra and teacher Hkawn Nan Tsin. I want the perpetrators to be punished accordingly. The perpetrators should not go unpunished. This incident is a matter that concerns the entire Kachin nation. We need laws that can actually protect the people.

An illustration of a woman with dark hair, wearing a yellow garment, and a headband adorned with large orange and yellow flowers and green leaves. The background is a solid orange color.

Ma Hta

My name is Ma Hta. I was born in 1973. Around 1986, I lived with my parents at xxx village, xxxx township in Kachin State. Later, I lived at xxx village, xxx township in Kachin State. As there was the resurgence of war in Kachin State in 2011, I had to flee from fighting and I lived in an IDP camp in Myitkyina. My childhood life was difficult due to war.

When I lived at xxx village, xxx township, my sisters and I had to go to school at xxx village. At that time, I was around 11 years old. I still remember that due to fighting between KIA and Burmese Army frequently, our family would run away from the war and live in tents in the valleys of xxx village. When we were hiding in the jungle, the family's belongings and money were destroyed by termites. We had experienced several occasions where the Burmese soldiers burned the houses in the village and we lost our belongings many times. In that situation, we had to start our lives again from zero.

In 1987, the army and column from xxx village in xxx township came to our village and burned and destroyed the houses. All the villagers were arrested and taken away. That day, my sister and I were not arrested because we were shopping in xxx village, but we escaped unscathed. Our family members were also taken away by the soldiers. The men and women who were captured by the soldiers were kept separately. They tortured and interrogated the men. My father was also accused of being a KIA soldier and tortured. I think eventually my father was unable to take it anymore and tried to run away. When he fled, the soldiers shot and killed my father. Actually, my father was not a KIA soldier at all. He was only a pastor in the Kachin Baptist Church.

After my father passed away, my family had to flee the war, so I couldn't go to school, I had to drop out when I got to the 7th grade. I got married and lived in xxx village. My husband was an orphan and grew up under the care of his relatives. In 2001, my husband passed away. At that time, I had 4 children and became a widow.

In 2007, I remarried, I had two more children from my second marriage, so I have a total of 6 children. My second daughter died at the age of 5. Due to the family's financial difficulties, my eldest daughter Hkawng Nansin dropped out of school in the 9th grade. In 2010-2011, my eldest daughter worked as a preschool teacher at a preschool opened by the Kachin Baptist Church in xxx village.

In June 2011, due to the recurrence of war in Kachin State, our family had to flee the war from xxx village to xxxxx town. While the eldest daughter, Hkawng Nansin, was a refugee, she was able to continue her 9th-grade education. In 2014, she had joined high school finals and worked as a volunteer teacher at a church school opened by the Kachin Baptist Convention in Hkawng Kha village. My daughter called to tell me that she bought me a gift for Mother's Day from her salary. A week after my daughter's phone call, I heard the bad news that the soldiers had tortured and killed my daughter Hkawng Nansin, a volunteer teacher at the church school at Hkawng Kha village.

On January 19, 2015, my daughter and teacher Maran Lura were brutally tortured and maimed to death by a group of soldiers at the volunteer home in Hkawng Kha Village where they lived. As soon as I heard the news, I felt my heart stop beating. I thought how much better it would be if this incident was just a dream for me. But it wasn't a dream. It really happened. It was the darkest time of my life when I lost my eldest daughter, Hkawng Nansin.

The Kachin Baptist Convention together with other Kachin people and other civil organizations had taken over the bodies of my daughter Hkawng Nancin and her fellow teacher Maran Lura, from Hkawng Kha village in Muse Township to Myitkyina. They carried them along the Union highway. The funeral ceremony was also done well. Being surrounded by this kind of recognition relieved my sadness somewhat. However, when I am alone, I always cry and grieve.

In 2015, I was invited to participate in an exchange program of women survivors organized by KWAT. Meeting women who had survived other human rights abuses allowed me to gradually heal my grief. Although I could not forget the events, I tried to ease the trauma because I needed to support my family members that remained. By participating in the training and workshops, I learned the importance of self-care in order to survive.

Later, I was one of the 5 people who started organizing a women's survivors group called Kasi Kaja and became active in the group. While trying to survive despite the anxiety, I also encountered various difficulties due to the COVID pandemic. We could not go out of the refugee camp to work. After going out, one could not go back into the refugee camp, and everyone had to face all kinds of difficulties and hardships. Then, military attempted a coup and has taken back power, and the situation has become even worse for those of us who are IDPs. There is not secure way to go out to find income, the commodity prices are increasingly very high. Our family

faced more difficulties than before. Though we had financial difficulties after military coup, I focused on giving my children education. Now, the military Junta planned to send us IDPs back home in this year 2023. All the IDPs are worried to go back to our villages, because there are military columns that will torture and kill us in the villages. I don't want to be forcibly repatriated as there is no security. As the fighting became more and more, if we IDPs were forced back to villages where there were fighting, it would push us to face similar situations like before.

Throughout my life since my childhood until now, I have experienced human rights violations frequently in the midst of armed conflicts, but I have never received justice. I have never seen the perpetrators being punished. We see that they are only allowed to go free. By giving this impunity, it is like encouraging them to commit crimes again. Therefore, I would like those who commit crimes to receive effective punishments.

I would like to ask the government not to arrest and kill innocent people unjustly. We would like to have a government that listens to the voice of the people and realizes that everyone can achieve full human rights. I believe that only then will our country become a just and truly peaceful country.

Doi Ra

My name is Doi Ra. I am 23 in 2023. Before I got married, I lived at xxx village, xxxx township in Kachin State. Between the ages of 15-18, I attended bible school while doing business. When my mother passed away, I was under the care of my father.

During the 4 years of bible school, I sold amber while working at a beauty salon. I also used to work as a maid. I married at the age of 19, after that my husband did not allow me to work outside of home. Our household mainly lived on gold mining as our house is on the bank of Irrawaddy River. Me and my husband had a son.

After three years of marriage on September 18, 2022, Burmese soldiers shot and killed my husband and they burned his body in our house compound. Because of my financial difficulties, I could only give boiled rice at the prayer meeting for the death of my husband.



During three months of the marriage, my husband didn't allow me to work, so when he passed away I didn't know how to work. When he was alive, he didn't even allow me to use mobile phone.

I didn't think I would face such a bad fortune. I don't want to face any more tragedy in my life. This incident is the most severe pain for me. When soldiers shot my husband dead and burned his body in our own yard, I felt like I was going to be crazy. I know that there are times in the world when people meet and when they are separated, but this incident was very bad for our family. I tried to stay alive only for my son. With the very severe trauma and pain I am feeling, I pray for God, trying to survive.

Now, for the living of my son and myself, I am trying to do random casual labour to find income. Before the marriage, I was a woman who could stand on my own. Now, I didn't work for a long time so I have no confidence in myself. I dare not try anything. I even have

to wear clothes that my friends gave me. I was able to relax a little because I had friends who understood and helped me.

After facing these incidents, KWAT arranged for me to meet with other women survivors and I learned that there are many other human rights violation incidents experienced by other like my family had faced. I've come to realize that I'm not the only one experiencing such situation. I was able to share my feelings with confidence by participating in the dialogues and exchanges with women who survived, I found energy to rebuild myself.

I want justice for this inhumane killing of an innocent citizen. Therefore, we have submitted a written application to the relevant officials. So far, there has been no response. I would like to get an answer. I would like to ask for action to be taken against the perpetrators of inhumane killings and the cases of human rights violations in our country by the army. I would like to request that children from families who had faced human rights violations be supported so that they can get an education. I want peace in our country soon.



Htu Ja

My name is Htu Ja. I have 5 siblings. As my father remarried and my siblings and I had to stay with our mother. We lived and grew up at xxx village, xxx township, Muse district in northern Shan State. My mother had to work very hard to feed and take care of us until we are grown up. The experience I never forget was the time when we didn't have enough rice to eat and we had to have boiled rice mixed with corn and pumpkin. Whenever I think about my childhood, I feel choked. In 2007 at the age of 20, I married with Ah Zau. After the marriage, we had 5 children. My husband mainly worked as a farmer for our living.

In 2017, Burmese soldiers accusing planting and blasting mines and shot him, so he lost one of his hands.

He was not only tortured, but also charged with article 17/1 and he was arrested and jailed for 2 years and 3 months. When my husband was imprisoned, I had to take care of children alone. Even though I wanted to raise my children with good education, I couldn't afford to and I had to send my eldest son to orphanage. I want to meet him very much. But I couldn't go and meet so far. I can't send him pocket money until now. I miss him so much. My eldest daughter also has a great deal of psychological trauma and she cannot go out from home. I also have a child who is at the age of breast feeding, however I don't have money to buy milk powder to wean my baby, so I haven't weaned yet. I do daily casual labour such as cutting sugar cane while carrying my child. I have to try to buy rice to eat, but as there is no work available every day, I don't have a regular income. On the day, I don't get work, I pick up firewood and sell it. Sometimes there is not enough rice, like when I was a child, I had to cook rice with pumpkin and corn. Sometimes, I need to wait until the children have finished eating and I have the left overs.

When my husband was released from prison, one of his hands was injured so he could not do hard work as before. Due to being tortured in the prison, he was wounded both inside and outside of his body, and mentally traumatized. When he started taking drugs to get relief from his internal injuries, he got addicted to drugs, since then I have also been experiencing domestic violence in the family. When he asks for money to use drugs, if I can't pay, he started beating me. I have no one to rely on anymore. I can't tell him

anything. Now I am afraid of my husband. As he is still alive, my children only have him to call father.

I could not feel happiness like in the early time of our marriage in our family. I have to live with my own mental trauma in difficult situations. My body has many injuries as I have faced domestic violence frequently. By looking the root cause of these problems, the arrest and torture by the military to my husband has resulted in this domestic violence. Our family has suffered a great deal, I don't want anyone to suffer like this.

We, the women survivors should have a place to talk freely. I would also like to request support for the technology and resources needed to restore the rights and rehabilitation of lives of the survivors. I also want to work at home to earn income. I hope that genuine peace will be achieved in Myanmar as soon as possible.

Hkawn Aung

My name is Hkawn Aung. When I was young, I lived at xxxx village, xxxx township in northern Shan State. My parents allowed me to go to school, however when I was at 3rd Standard, I had to stop going school due to eye injuries, Our parents did casual labour and took care of our siblings. I thank my parents.

When I was 17, I married with my husband Ah Gun and lived at xxx village, xxx township. We have 3 sons and 2 daughters. Our family lived on agriculture and animal husbandry. As my husband and I didn't know about reproductive health and family planning, we got one child after another every year.

In 2016, there was political and military tensions and instability at xxx village in xxx township. My husband made a trip from xxx village to xxxx town working to herd cows to send to the border on October 4, 2016. Since then, he has disappeared. We, our family and relatives tried to search for him but until now we can't know if he is still alive or not. During these days, there was fighting at xxx village in xxx township and military was carrying out airstrikes.



When my husband disappeared, the youngest daughter was only 9 months old. The children asked me why their father didn't come back and cried. When they cried, I felt very sad and I also cried many times. I got married at the age of 17 and became a widow at 30. When my husband disappeared, I was filled with worries about how could I raise my 5 children and how to solve for the daily living.

Now, I am doing casual labour and taking care of sons and daughters. As I want my children educated, I sent them to school. As I was working very hard, my health deteriorated. When I felt sick, I had to take care of myself.

I will never forget what happened to my husband. He loves me very much. He loves the children more than I do and takes care very much. My daughter says she always dreamed about her father. In her dream, he has come back home and he is stood in front of the house so she went to open the door. However, it is not real but a dream, she used to say. Every time she wakes up from this dream, she misses her father and cries. Whenever my youngest daughter

asked me, "Mother, other people have fathers to call 'father', where did my father go?", I have to cry silently. As I don't have husband, the people around look down on me. I was looked down on by people around me who could not understand and empathize with me. In the same way that I could not stay with my parents for very long when I was young, my children could not stay with their parents as their father is not with us. I want to have warm family love in my life. I continue to live with the belief that God will take care of our family. Anyway, I am glad that my children have grown up healthily.

After the incident of disappearance of my husband, I became very afraid of people. I didn't dare to talk to others. Later, a coordinator from KWAT came and meet me frequently and invited me to participate in the exchange program of women survivors who faced human rights violations. Through the meetings with other women survivors, we became close to each other and I could reveal my feelings. I want to have a vocational career so that I can have enough income to support the education of my children to become educated persons.

I am praying for Burma to have genuine peace quickly without any fighting.



Ah Nyoï

My name is Ah Nyoï and live at xxx village, xxxx township in Kachin State. I had a happy life with my parents when I was young. Our father always taught us and showed us the way how to live. I usually remember my childhood life happily. I was very good at athletics when I was young. But there was no one to support me and I couldn't make a career in sports. As a member of Kachin ethnic minority, I was discriminated against by my teachers. When I was in 4th Standard, there was the '88 uprising. The schools across the country were closed and I had to stop school for one year.

I got married in 1993. We had 1 son and 2 daughters. After the marriage, I worked in various jobs to earn a living for my family, and I was also responsible for all the household chores. I was working as a farmer as well as I supported my family by working in various businesses such as farming, cattle trading businesses, and poultry farming. I started breeding poultry in 2021. When I was working on poultry farming, on February 1, 2021, the military took power, and the people of Waingmaw Township held a demonstration against the military coup.

I took part in the demonstration at the front role and I was arrested by soldiers and police and charged with article 505(a). At the early time of detention, I was not allowed to meet with my family and I was very depressed.

I was anxious that my family would be worried as they could not contact me. I will never forget the feeling when I arrived in prison. I became even more impatient to endure this unjust detention, I wanted to work more for our oppressed people. In the prison, I couldn't read the newspaper, I couldn't watch TV. I didn't know what was happening outside, it was like my mind was in darkness. When I was in prison, I told other inmates what was happening outside; people were being arrested, tortured, and killed daily. At that time, I was called and given a warning by prison authorities "not to tell [other inmates] about outside in the prison".

I fasted and prayed thinking that only God could save me. I was released from prison on June 30, 2021. When I was released from prison, I felt sad as some of my friends didn't even want to talk to me or ask me questions. When I got out of prison, I couldn't do any of the businesses that I was working with before. I lost my poultry farming business and there were many challenges for our family. About a week after I was released from prison, military vehicles kept coming around our house. As it was no longer safe for me, I had to move to Hpakant to avoid being arrested again. In early 2021, someone had a plan to ask my second daughter to marry him but because I was arrested, all the plans were ruined.

Currently, I am growing saffron and mustard in our farm to earn my income.

In 2022, I participated in an exchange program of women survivors organized by KWAT. Women's survivor group, Kasi Kaja also came to encourage me. I really felt encouraged. We can share our feelings and experiences with each other among women survivors. We can also listen to the feelings of others.

What I want to say is that we cannot be afraid of those who are doing injustice. We need to reveal justice. Actually, I am no longer afraid to die. We had suffered injustice for a long time. We cannot lose this time. If we need to sacrifice, we should sacrifice. I don't want what people had paid for the truth to be worthless. I want to see success. I want to have a country where you can enjoy full human rights. I want genuine peace very much.

I would like to ask international community to help and support to stop human rights violations perpetrated by the Burmese army on the people in Burma and not to commit them again.



Ah Ra

My name is Ah Ra. In my childhood, I lived at xxx village, xxx township in Kachin State together with my parents. My parents were farmers working in paddy fields and farms. I got married in 2004. At that time, I was only 15 years old. After the marriage, I kept stay at Kaungja village. We had 3 children; a son and 2 daughters. When I was young, I experienced an incident that I will never forget. Around our village, there was frequent fighting. One day when our family went to the farm, Burmese soldiers burned down our house. When we came home in the evening, everything we owned including house were gone. Everything was lost in the fire. At that time, I felt very bitter towards the Burmese soldiers. I was worried that we would have to spend our lives in poverty again.

In 2011, there was recurrence of war in Kachin State, and our family moved to an IDP camp at xxx village in xxxx township in Kachin State. This time, we had to leave all the belongings of the family, including our rice grains. When we ran away, we had to carry as much as we could.

When the fighting calmed down a bit, we went back to our house to check but there was nothing left. All the grains were gone and nothing was left. The soldiers destroyed all of our family's possessions. The whole house is full of bullet holes. If we want to go home, we don't have home to go to.

We had to restart our lives frequently due to war. While I was at the IDP camp, my husband was working as a carpenter to feed our family.

On May 13, 2021, while he was buying a phone top up card and cigarettes, he was arrested by police and soldiers and tortured. He was accused of being in connection with the KIA and being involved in people's demonstration against the coup, and he was arrested. After negotiation with the camp in charge and religious leaders with the military, finally he was released. He was tortured over one night and all his head, face, ribs, and the whole body were bruised and swollen. Finally, he got back home. Now, he cannot do hard work anymore. After working one day, he needs to take rest for about a week. Torture didn't make him bleed but gave him internal injuries. After this incident of my husband, I have to take responsibility for the living, education and health of the family, as well as medicine for my husband. Now, our family has taken up the work to throw

the waste away from the refugee camp. We earn 50,000 kyats a month. After the military coup in 2021, our children had to stop going to school for a year. Even though our family had financial difficulties, we still support our children for their education.

In my mind, I always feel insecure. I am worried because anything could happen at any moment. Because the military accuses the public as they like and unjustly arrests, tortures and kills civilians. I pray to God to overcome any difficulties and try to survive.

I don't want anyone else to suffer human rights violations like we did. We just want justice. There is also a lot of discrimination in our country, based on ethnicity and religion. I want to see that there is elimination of all discriminations based on ethnicity, religion, and the difference between wealth and poverty.



Ah Tawng

My name is Ah Tawng. I live at xxx village, xxx township in northern Shan State. My parents do farm and corn plantation. I started to go to school at the age of 5.

In my life, I had to flee from war many times and I had to leave school before I could graduate.

In 1967, due to the fighting between the Communist Party of Burma and Burma Socialist Program Party, our family moved to live at xxx village, xxx township in Muse district. From there in 1969, we moved again to xxx village, xxx township. In 1987, we moved again to xxx village, xxx township where our grandpa lived. In the same year, I got married to my husband Ah Tu. After the marriage, we had 3 sons and 2 daughters.

In 2011 when there is occurrence of war in Kachin areas, we moved again from xxx village, xxx township to an IDP camp on China border. When the fighting calmed down a bit, we returned to our village and lived. On November 4, 2011, my 24-year-old son Solomon was tortured and shot dead by the army. We learned about the incident the day after it happened. People found him dead with gunshot wounds and injuries due to brutal torture. When I saw the body of my son, the flesh and bones in the wound on his thigh that had been repeatedly cut with a knife, I felt helpless and broken hearted, since that day, I started to have heart problems and hypertension. I had learned that my son was accused that he had a connection with KIA. Whenever I thought about my son, I have a heart problem, so we had to hide his photos so that we can't see his face. After the incident of my son, I feel like our family is insecure and there is always a threat.

On March 25, 2014, army took my husband and tortured. Seven days after the arrest and detention, he was released. When he was released, he was wounded with injuries inside and outside of the body due to torture. When it happened, our family was in a great deal of financial difficulty and we could not even afford to pay for the cost of treatment of my husband; we had to borrow money to treat him. Although some of his injuries were treated, the internal damage could not be addressed, so his health is deteriorated and he cannot do any hard work.

The military should not arrest, torture, and kill people at all.

In 2016, as military bombarded xxx village, xxxx township, our family once again fled to the Chinese border IDP camp and stay there until today. Our family rarely had a happy time and lived in constant fear of war. It is really not easy for us to have to rebuild our lives every time they are destroyed. For the living of our family, when there is no fighting, we grow corn. Even though we are living in an IDP camp, there is no support or healthcare, and our lives become more difficult. We have to go from the IDP camp to the public hospital at XXX town, where the treatment is not free. As IDPs we are facing various challenges from all sides. As the health of my husband is not good, I am the only one to lead solving all the needs of the family, but can't support well for the education of the children. None of our children have reached their high school finals.

While I was under these pressures, KWAT invited me to participate in the exchange program of the survivors. We can share our difficulties and experiences with each other with other women survivors and we can also listen to each other. By this kind of meeting with others, I realize that I am not suffering alone like this and there are also others suffering like me. I feel strengthened to continue to survive.

In my life, I want justice for my son who was killed innocently. And I want to build a somewhat memorial for my son. Our family have faced Human rights violations and war crimes repeatedly but there has never been justice. I want those who commit crimes to be punished.

I would like the relevant authorities and the international community to help us so that the situation we are facing does not happen again.

Allowing the perpetrators of human rights violations to go unpunished opens the way for further violations of human rights. Therefore, I would like to call on the relevant authorities and the international community to take action to stop human rights violations.

I want our country to have genuine peace. I want to build a small house as a memorial of the death of my son, to commemorate his life and remind us of the incident.

Lu Ra

My name is Lu Ra. I lived in xxx village, xxx township in Kachin State when I was young. Currently, I live at xxx village, xxx township in Kachin State. In 2007 at the age of 18, I got married. We had a daughter and 2 sons. After the military coup on February 1, 2021, my eldest son and daughter had to stop going to school, and they worked at the poultry farm of their aunt to support the family with their income.

But, on May 4, 2021, a shadow fell over our family. On that day, a heavy weaponry shell fired by the army fell on the place where my son and daughter were working and hit my eldest son who was serving the family, killing him. My son was only 14 years old when he died. He was a very clever and wise child who knew his parents well. During school holidays, he often helped his father in the paddy fields.

He always said that he would work hard and try to become an educated person when he grows up. I was very happy when he was alive. I wasn't when I heard he was injured. When I got to the place of incident, my son could barely talk. I didn't think the injuries were that serious, but he died later that day. I pitied my son. It was the darkest time in my life when my son died. On that day, my son didn't want very much to go to work. It was true, but, I didn't tell him not to go; I still can't figure out why I didn't stop him. My son was killed due to the bad political situation. If the political situation had been stable, my son would not have faced such a tragedy. Due to the military coup, not only my children could not go to school, but my son lost his life. But have I consoled myself by considering it as a payment for the betterment of my people and the country.

Since the day my son died, I could not sleep. After the death of my son, I was always worried, because after this incident of my son, the army came to check our house almost every night. It is an area where fighting can happen at any time, so I live in constant fear and worry.

When there were fighting, there was no security and it was very difficult for us to go into forest and mountain to work for our income.

In October 2022, the fighting intensified at xxx village in xxx township. The military column entered once more into our village and there were blasts due to heavy weaponry firing. A 21-year-old man near our house got injured as a mortar shell dropped about 30 feet from our house. At that time, heavy weaponry shells dropped on the sides of the road and beside the houses in our village and people got injured. We, the people, always had to live in fear during these wars.

For me, I live with trauma because I lost my son, and I also had to live with constant worry due to the wars. At that time, I had a chance to participate in a program where I could meet with other women survivors. In that exchange program of women survivors, it was very valuable for me to securely open up and reveal what I had experienced and suffered.

As a survivor, I would like to ask the international community to listen to the voice of the survivors of human rights violation in Burma and help and support to get truth and justice. I want Burma to be at peace quickly. There is no safety for us women and children. People are also not safe. Children are losing their lives.

There are many nights where I can't sleep, the period of revolution has been too long. I don't want to hear sounds of gunshots anymore. I want children to be able to learn like before. I want to have chance quickly to walk and work freely.

Mai Ra

My name is Mai Ra. In my childhood, I lived with my parents and I was very happy. I lived at xxx village, xx township in northern Shan State. I have three siblings, 2 sisters and 1 brother. When I was young, I wanted to become a singer. But my dream was never realized. I was able to attend school until 5th standard.

I got married at the age of 22 in 2009. I have a son and a daughter. Our family works in the agricultural business. At that time, we could go into and come back from China and trade. There were opportunities. In 2021 the war broke out at xxx village in xxx township where we lived. As there is no safety in our area, all the villagers including our family fled to a IDP camp on the China border.



Working for a living in the middle of the fighting is very difficult. If the fighting calms down for a while, we go back and forth between our house and the camp and work at home. In 2016, as the fighting intensified again along the xxx village, xxxx township including our village and we had to flee once again. Our family has been living in the Fai Kawng IDP Camp until this day.

On March 30, 2017, I stepped on a landmine buried beside a football field near our village and got a serious injury on my right leg. When I stepped on the landmine and there was a blast, my ears couldn't hear anything, my eyes could not see anything. I was very sad. When I was wounded, I did not have enough money to get treatment. I was very worried that my leg would need amputating. It was also very difficult to go around to work to pay for the treatment for my leg and for our living. During these times, in our region, we needed a certificate to go into China. So, it was the time very difficult to go and work or trade on the Chinese side.

The vegetables we grew in our village were destroyed by the army and we couldn't grow anything back. I had to ask permission from the army to get my leg treated. When I was being treated, I felt very depressed. My children were still young and I had to face these times with many worries. The doctors could take out the pieces of shrapnel from my leg. Because of God's grace, I didn't need to have an amputation.

I was so embarrassed because a landmine damaged my leg. The way the people around looked at me and talked about me as if it was bad Karma. However, through this trauma, I had the opportunity to meet women survivor group. When I met them, I could reveal my feelings and I could also learn the experiences of other women survivors and I realized that I was not the only one suffering like this. So, I regained strength to rebuild my life.

As I got injured my leg and could not work like before, my husband had to try to struggle alone for our family as well as to take care of me. I also would like to contribute if possible. However, I don't have money to invest and I need vocational skills. I want to sell groceries while I am staying at home.

Our mountainous areas are affected by war, so we need landmine clearing and awareness on the impact of landmines. I would like to request the Burmese army and all the relevant armed forces not put landfills around the villages where the people live, and to clear the landmines where they are already buried.

It is necessary to make people aware of where they put landmines in war zones. The government is responsible for the safety of the people.

I would like to ask international community to help stop selling weapons to the Burmese army that is terrorizing the people. I also would like to ask to help to stop the foreign investments that are helping fund the violence and war of the Burmese army.

The Voices of *Women Survivors*



“We don’t want the soldiers to make military bases in the villages where our people are living, or staying at the places where people are present. I want them to go immediately. I don’t want any fighting.”



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“We want survivors like us not to be marginalized, but to receive help and support so that they can rebuild their lives. I don’t want anyone to experience the kind of incidents we experienced. So, in order to achieve truth and justice, I would like to urge that the perpetrators are properly punished.”



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“If there is a war, the military targets civilians, unfairly arrests and tortures them as they like. I would like to ask the relevant authorities of the country to prevent these incidents and protect people.”



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“Torture would devastate a person’s life even if he/she is barely alive. That kind of unfairness should not be allowed. I would like to request the international community to give their full support in order to take action against serious human rights violations in Myanmar.”



“

“When the country is at peace, I don’t want for those who have had their human rights violated to be forgotten. There should be support for treatment of mental trauma, vocational training, education and reparations. The perpetrators should also confess their wrong doings, and they should receive the punishment they deserve.”



“

“Throughout my life since my childhood until now, I have experienced human rights violations frequently in the midst of armed conflicts, but I have never received justice. I have never seen the perpetrators being punished. We see that they are only allowed to go free. By giving this impunity, it is encouraging them to commit crimes again. Therefore, I would like those who commit crimes to receive effective punishments.”



“

What I want to say is that we cannot be afraid of those who are doing injustice. We need to reveal justice. Actually, I am no longer afraid to die. We had suffered injustice for a long time. We cannot lose this time. If we need to sacrifice.



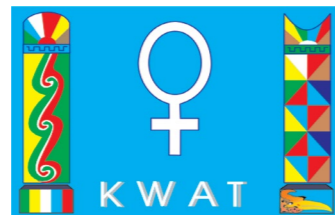


*we should sacrifice
“Allowing the perpetrators of
human rights violations to go
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way for further violations of
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human rights violations.”*

Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT) *urges the international community*

- (1) To foreground the voices of women survivors of human rights violations in the transition and justice process in building the future federal democratic state.
- (2) To take legal action against the perpetrators to prevent such human rights violations from happening again.
- (3) To encourage survivors by supporting them with their mental health, without judgement or discrimination from their peers, family and community members.
- (4) To help and support survivors to establish sustainable livelihoods and to develop vocational skills by international organizations.
- (5) To support an impartial and independent investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators of international war crimes that have caused such long-term emotional and physical trauma for the women and people of Kachin state

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