



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

KHRG's Statement on Mass Killing in Dooplaya District

July, 22, 2021

Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) stands firmly for human rights, and is concerned by the news of 25 men found killed in Waw Lay, Ka Nae Lay area, Kaw T'ree Township, Dooplaya District in June 2021. In interviews with The Irrawaddy and Karen Information Center (KIC), the Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO) justified the killings, claiming that these men were spies working for the military junta, and adding: "we have had to do what we are supposed to do as we are fighting a war."

KHRG strongly condemns this mass killing. Extrajudicial executions constitute "willful killings" and are thus in serious violation of the Geneva Conventions, specifically Common Article 3, which addresses non-international armed conflict, and which the KNU has formally committed to abide by. Also, under International Human Rights Law, the prohibition of the arbitrary deprivation of life, the right to humane treatment, and the right to a fair trial applies to everyone including those alleged to be spies.

KHRG welcomes the announcement by the Karen National Union (KNU) of a full investigation into this incident. Given KNDO is an armed wing of the KNU, KNU has a responsibility to conduct an impartial investigation. KHRG will watch for the results of the KNU's investigation into this case, and calls on the KNU to hold accountable those found to be responsible for this crime and to take appropriate judicial action against the perpetrators. KHRG is committed to the defense of human rights and the need to end impunity for violations, regardless of who the perpetrators may be. KHRG calls for accountability for all human rights violations and abuses committed by any actor during the present military coup and under past regimes.