



The Karen Human Rights Group Stands with #WithRefugees World Refugee Day

June 20, 2021

Today, World Refugee Day, KHRG calling for international communities and relevant stakeholders to stand for their protection and survival with the 71.7 million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) around the world who have been uprooted from their homes and ancestral lands. Since the military coup on February 1, 2021, there has been a sharp increase of political instability and civil war resulting forcible displacement of local ethnic communities and they were in the emergency need of humanitarian support. However, the State Administration Council has been ignoring the needed humanitarian support for the local ethnic communities who were fleeing from armed conflict. In addition, we have seen that the SAC is blocking and destroying the humanitarian support that supposed to flow to the needed communities. This act is a violation of international humanitarian law.

Due to the increase in political instability and the intensification of hostilities, IDPs and refugees are unable to return to their places of origin in southeast Myanmar. They fear that if they return to their homes their safety would be threatened by the ongoing hostilities in southeast Myanmar; the Tatmadaw's indiscriminate shelling and bombings of villages; landmine contamination; ongoing militarization; political instability; and the risk of abuse by the Tatmadaw, Border Guard Forces (BGFs) and some EAOs. Their main concerns are safety, access to land, and loss of livelihood.

Apart from the political instability and civil war in Myanmar, the year's long crisis of COVID-19 that occurred all over the world has added another layer of insecurity in the already deteriorating human rights and humanitarian crisis. Regarding COVID-19 crisis, KHRG recent published report "*Left Behind*" key finding also point it out that all of the covid 19 response and supports have stopped since the military coup in Myanmar.

In order to ensure the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees and IDPs to their places of origin, KHRG recommends the following:

- The international community, including the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly, and ASEAN must strongly pressure the State Administrative Council (SAC) to stop attacking civilian areas, and unarmed civilians.
- Neighboring countries of Myanmar must protect the people flees from Myanmar and provide them with security and humanitarian aids.
- SAC must stop the interruption and block of humanitarian aid to the conflict affected and displaced.
- SAC must allow stakeholders supporting communities affected COVID-19 pandemic to operate freely. SAC must also resume COVID response activities.
- The international community must recognize the actors providing humanitarian aids in the ethnic areas and must collaborate and support them.

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