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The Karen Grassroots Women's Network Welcomes Cases Against Burma for Genocide

Date: 8.12.2019

The Karen Grassroots Women's Network (KGWN) welcomes the two new legal cases against Burma's State-actors and military for crimes against the Rohingya in conflict-torn Rakhine State and the investigation authorized by the International Criminal Court. All three legal actions help move us to justice in Burma.

The cases were filed at the International Court of Justice by the Gambia, with the support of the 57 nations in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and in Argentina allege violations of the Genocide Convention, which Burma became a party to in 1956. There is clear evidence of the atrocities documented by the United Nations Fact Finding Mission among others. We are particularly horrified by the evidence of widespread rape and gender-based violence perpetrated by the Burmese military.

For decades, we have experienced and witnessed the abuse of ethnic people in Burma taking place with impunity. We have tirelessly called for accountability to uphold the rule of law through the prosecution of perpetrators. Women's groups have been documenting sexual-violence in conflict and have lobbied for stronger rule of law mechanisms for many years. We are grateful for the steps taken by the international community to address the human rights abuses and are in solidarity with efforts and calls made for justice. We hope for the day when we will have a country subject to the rule of law, but until that day we depend on these international actions to help bring justice to victims and an end to ongoing crimes.

The United Nations has used several international mechanisms to investigate crimes against the ethnic people of Burma. In 2017 the United Nations Human Rights Council established a Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to determine the facts and circumstances of human-rights violations by the military and security forces. The findings released in 2018 and 2019, show the reality of the brutal crimes committed. Accountability is long overdue.

Despite the lack of cooperation by the Burma government and military with the international accountability mechanisms, the three new cases have set the stage for a set of proceedings to finally bring justice for some of the many victims of this military. These perpetrators must be stopped. As women who have suffered at this military's hand, we reach out our hand to women who have suffered across Burma in solidarity, strength, and in the hope of a new day.

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