

Statement By European Karen Network

For Immediate Release, Sunday 28th March 2021

EU Must Act in Response to Bombing in Karen State and Killing of Protesters

The European Karen Network, representing Karen communities in Europe, calls for urgent action by the European Union in response to the use of jet aircraft to bomb villagers in Karen state, and the killing of more than 100 protesters across the country.

Following a daytime flyover, jets bombed the Day Pu No area of Mutraw (Papun) District in eastern Karen State, Burma during the night of 27th March.

The bombings killed three people and injured eight more, but details are still being confirmed and casualties may be higher. Many homes were damaged and three were completely destroyed. More than 1,000 people have now had to flee their homes. Many more villagers in the area are now also getting ready to hide in the jungle. There is great fear in the whole area.

On the same day around 120 people, protesters and people simply in their homes, were killed by the Burmese military.

International companies doing business with military companies have helped the military make profits which are used to buy the weapons they use to kill our people.

We recall that the Burmese military bought MIG 29 jet aircraft after receiving the first payment from Total Oil, a French company, with revenue from the Yadana gas project.

We are aware that as recently as 2017 Germany sold Grob training aircraft to the Burmese military, in order to train the pilots of jet aircraft like those which are bombing and killing our people now.

European Union countries and companies have played an important role in financing and equipping the Burmese military. This gives them an extra responsibility to act. It is a responsibility they have not lived up to.

The European Union is still not doing everything it can to pressure the Burmese military to stop killing civilians. On Monday 22nd March, the only action the EU agreed to take was visa bans on eleven generals, which will mean they cannot take holidays in the EU.

We call on the European Union to take the following urgent steps:

- Impose sanctions on military companies.
- Impose sanctions to stop Total Oil from paying gas revenue to the military controlled government.
- Commit to implement all the recommendations of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, including support for referring Burma to the International Criminal Court.
- Use the diplomatic influence of the EU to ask other countries to join the EU in imposing arms embargoes.
- Provide a significant increase in humanitarian assistance in Karen state and other ethnic states where attacks and militarisation by the Burmese military has caused internal displacement, and where Civil Disobedience Movement people are taking sanctuary.

We further call on Germany, which has been opposing stronger action by the EU, including opposing sanctioning military companies, to drop its opposition and instead listen to the voices of our people.

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