



The Karen Women's Organization Calls on World Refugee Day For Refugees to be Supported to Live with Dignity

20 June 2022

On World Refugee Day, the Karen Women's Organization (KWO) calls for support of refugees so we all can live with full dignity as human beings. Refugee Day is a reminder of the struggles those fleeing violence endure as they leave behind their homes and livelihoods to seek safety. Refugees are resilient and capable. They need support and access so they can stand with dignity.

Refugees in the nine camps along the Thai-Burma border are living with less than the minimum standards for basic services. Access to the refugee camps has become very difficult for both refugees and service providers as the impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic continue to limit mobility. Shortfalls in funding have led to camp programs becoming under-serviced and underfunded. Refugee community based organizations active in the camps, including KWO, are operating with limited resources.

Refugees should not have to pay for services like education and health, when their livelihoods have been crippled because they are not allowed to work. Refugees living in the camps experience mental health challenges. Support for their security and sustainable livelihood must be in part of policy being considered by the Thai government.

Further, as the Burma Army plunges the country into economic turmoil, and a humanitarian crisis plagued by instability and negligence grows, the need to support refugees and internally displaced people is greater than ever before. Active conflict makes it impossible for them to return home.

World Refugee Day is not a celebration, but rather a reminder of the adversity and resilience that refugees have embodied during their formidable fight to be recognized as equals. They need support, but they must also be provided with documentation which allows them to stand on their own. With access to travel and legal work, refugees will not need to depend on a host country, or organizations in the long term. They can live free from fear, harm, and with dignity.

KWO urges the Royal Thai government to provide legal documentation for refugees to be able to work outside of the refugee camps and subsequently be able to earn an income. In addition, refugees should be able to access health and education services fairly, and without discrimination. We request that the international community put pressure on the Thai authorities to adopt policies that grant refugees the right to employment in Thailand safely and protected by law.

For more information- Please contact KWO Central