



**KAREN WOMEN'S ORGANISATION CONDEMNS BURMESE MILITARY'S CONTINUED AIRSTRIKES  
AND INDISCRIMINATE SHELLING OF CIVILIANS  
IN KAWTHOOLEI, SOUTHEAST BURMA**

**For Immediate Release Tuesday 12th<sup>h</sup> September 2023**

**The Karen Women's Organisation condemns** the Burmese military continued airstrikes and indiscriminate shelling targeting civilians which has been ongoing this month. These attacks have killed and wounded at least 30 civilians mostly women and children. The recent aggressive airstrikes and mortar shelling have been particularly intensive in Kler Lwee Htu, Mutraw district.

As just one example, on September 7th, 2023 at 18:03 pm the Burmese military carried out an airstrike in Htee Gaw Hta village, Na Koh Kee village tract, Dweh Lo township, Mutraw district around the school compound areas and killing a teacher with 3 students and wounding one teacher with 5 students. In Kler Lwee Htu district on Sunday, September 3rd, the Burmese military airstrike on civilians resulted in the death of a 12-year-old boy, leaving a 16-year-old girl injured, and causing the destruction of numerous houses and other public buildings.

These airstrikes displayed devastating power incinerating bodies, leaving grieving families with little to honour deceased loved ones. These attacks on civilian targets within villages constitute clear war crimes and flagrant violations of international law.

Since the targeting of these areas by of Burmese Military through both airstrikes and shelling has resulted in the displacement of more than a thousand civilians mostly women, children and elderly people. These IDPs face challenges in getting treatment for their wounded , and having enough food and safe shelter especially because it is now the rainy season.

In addition to the airstrikes, daily widespread shelling continues to terrorise the community in the region, including children, women, and the elderly.

Burmese military airstrikes have become a grim daily reality across the nation. In Kawthoolei, (Karen State) alone, more than 700,000 people have been forcibly displaced from their homes since the attempted coup began in early 2021. Airstrikes indiscriminately kill civilians and destroy vital infrastructure, **including medical centers, churches, schools, libraries, and monasteries.**

The Karen people and the people of Burma remain steadfast in their resistance to military rule while advocating for human rights and democracy. Regrettably, the international community's response has fallen short of addressing this ongoing crisis.

**Karen Women's Organisation calls for immediate international action in the three areas:**

**Emergency Support: Food, Treatment, and Medical Aid**

KWO urgently appeals for emergency support and a rapid response for the innocent villagers enduring the impact of airstrikes and indiscriminate mortar shelling. Specifically, those who have been injured require immediate medical treatment and assistance in accessing life-saving medications. In addition to medical support, our people also require emergency food assistance for their daily sustenance, as

they are currently seeking refuge in the jungle/forest and are unable to fully engage in their livelihoods.

#### **Sanction aviation fuel**

Without aviation fuel the Burmese military jets can't fly and can't bomb. International sanctions to stop or limit the ability of the Burmese military to purchase aviation fuel should be the most urgent priority for the international community. Airstrikes have created a human rights and humanitarian catastrophe. The International Community can help if governments and companies act quickly.

#### **Sanction sources of revenue**

Karen Women's Organization and hundreds of other Burmese civil society organisations have repeatedly called for targeted international sanctions to cut sources of revenue to the Burmese military. The limited sanctions in the past two years are welcome but there is still much more the international community can do to cut revenue going to the Burmese military. Actions should include sanctioning: state-owned enterprises, Burmese military companies which are joint ventures, such as Mytel, and Burmese crony businesses with military business relationships. Failure to impose these sanctions increases revenue which pays for the bombs dropped on Karen villages.

#### **Cross border Aid:**

People fleeing attacks by the Burmese military face a double challenge that prevents them from receiving the life-saving aid they desperately need due to lack of humanitarian aids resources. In Kawthoolei within KNU administration areas the majority of affected civilians and IDPs receive support through cross-border humanitarian aid. Currently, there is a pressing increasing need for all Karen Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to work together in responding to these emergency needs, given the constraint of limited resources. KWO again calls for increased resources for cross border aid and continued coordination among Karen CBO's

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