

## The 40-Year Journey of the Karen Women's Organization

•Four former KWO leaders hold high-level positions in the Karen National Union (KNU): one on the KNU Central Executive Committee (P'Doh Naw Dah Dah, her 2nd term, and she is the only woman among 11 members), and three women in the KNU Justice Department (P'Doh Naw Myaing Po as KNU Chief Judge, P'Doh Naw Mary Tay as Judge One, and P'Doh Naw Blooming •KWO established the "Advanced Naw Kyaw Paw received the •KWO releases a Briefing Paper: Night as Judge Two). Political Training for Women" 2025 Ginetta Sagan Award from "Stop Violence Against Women a 3 months residential course Amnesty International for in Burma: Challenges facing •KWO holds its 8th Congress. The black shadow in the KWO for women leaders to become courage in defending Human women amid escalating flag, representing the oppression of women, was reduced by a more politically aware and conflict in Kawthoolei." Rights. third, to symbolize an increase in Karen women's freedoms and empowered. enjoyment of rights. 2024 -KWO celebrates 40 years 2021 2024 2023 2022 2021 and will continue on our journey to promote the advancement of women The number of IDPs in The number of IDPs in •In 2022, scaled up attacks by The Burmese military stages in leadership positions Kawthoolei reaches over one Kawthoolei reaches 750,000. the junta resulted in 350,000 a coup on February 1st, sets and to advocate for child million, its highest level on IDPs in Kawthoolei. up the State Administrative protection, women's rights record. Council (SAC), and attacks and access to justice. those who resist. •KWO holds its 7th Congress. SAC attacks against civilians On International Women's •KWO launches the ARMcaused mass displacement. Day, KWO released a report SOP for Kawthoolei. It is •The KWO General Secretary, In Kawthoolei, 150,000 •KWO wins the annual about the courage and •KWO with other Karen CBOs the Standard Operating Naw K'Nyaw Paw, receives became IDPs. resilience of Karen Women "Women of Change Procedure to respond to cases and local governance provide the International Women of Village Chiefs titled: "Kill Me Award" from the US of Sexual and Gender Based emergency humanitarian Courage Award from the US Instead of Them" Embassy in Rangoon. aid to thousands of IDPs. Violence in Kawthoolei. State Department. 2020-2021 - Present 2019 2017 2018 2020 2011 •COVID-19 pandemic started. •KWO celebrates 25-years. •KWO created a written record •KWO releases the report, of our Policies and distributed "Walking Amongst Sharp On November 25th, the to all KWO committees. Knives" about the increasing International Day to Stop KWO holds its 6th Congress number of female village ·Naw K'nyaw Paw Nimrod, Violence Against Women, •KWO launches a revised and chiefs, and the abuses they KWO General Secretary, is KWO released "Salt in the •KWO's former leader, expanded ARM-SOP: guidelines suffered at the hands of the selected as the winner of the Wound: Justice Outcomes P'Doh Naw Zipporah Sein, for services to victims of SGBV Burmese military. 2013 P'doh Mahn Sha Young and SGBV cases in the Karen elected to KNU as the Vice in the refugee camps. Leader Award. refugee camps, 2011-13". Chairperson. 2010-2013 2012 2010 2015 2014 2011 2000 •Bilateral Ceasefire signed The Nationwide Ceasefire The Karen Peace Support between the KNU and the Group is established. KWO is Agreement is signed by a SPDC. a founding member of this majority of the invited parties local network. on 31 March. •The KWO General Secretary, P'Doh Naw Zipporah Sein, •KWO General Secretary, P'Doh was included in the "1000 Naw Zipporah Sein, received Peace Women", activists from the 2007 Perdita Huston Human 150 countries collectively Rights Award for her leadership nominated for the 2005 Nobel in helping ethnic Karen women Peace Prize. attain basic human rights. •In collaboration with MAP Foundation, and network of In response to the mass •KWO holds its 4th Congress. •KWO released a follow up report women's groups, released resettlement and the loss of •KWO holds its 5th Congress titled "State of Terror" about the the ARM-SOP (Automatic many trained community •KWO releases its first report, on-going Human Rights abuses Response Mechanismmembers, KWO created a "Shattering Silences," which The former KWO General perpetrated against Karen Standard Operating "Handover Manual" to guide documented the widespread women by the SPDC (State Peace Secretary, P'doh Naw Procedures): guidance on the transfer of knowledge and systematic rape being Zipporah Sein is elected to Development Council) Burmese what to do in case of sexual and responsibility in a way committed by the SPDC KNU General Secretary. military. that minimized harm to the violence for migrant and Burmese military. refugee women. community. 2008 2007 2004 2006 2005 2003 Large influx of IDPs led Resettlement of refugees to the establishment of from the 9 camps along Thai-Burma border to 3rd Ee Htu Hta IDP camp. countries started by UNHCR with Royal Thai Government approval. •KWO set up its first office Outreach in Kawthoolei in Thailand (Mae Sariang), from village to district levels. and increased access to Expanded community work resources, and funding. focusing on women, children KWO's first formal donor and the most vulnerable. was the Burmese Relief Centre (BRC). •KWO met with more international donors and •KWO holds its 1st Congress. successfully increased our 1998 •KWO held its 3rd Congress. •KWO Central Executive annual budget year by Committee held an year to allow us to expand •KWO holds its 2nd Congress. Enhanced and developed the Reformed and restructured activities and projects. Emergency Meeting, to KWO leadership roles and KWO and created a formal approve appointments to structure. Constitution which allowed fill vacant positions in the KWO able to expand some ·Karen leadership dispersed, for more structure separate committee, instead of at of our funded projects into KWO working in each site as •KWO's first website is set up. from the KNU and organizing the Congress which was districts of Kawthoolei. possible. began. postponed. 1999-1949 2000-2004 - Present 2000 1999 1985 - 1995 1949 The Women's League of Widespread attacks by Lots of international advocacy, raising awareness Burma (WLB) was formed. Burmese military across about the issues in Burma, Kawthoolei. Many people KWO was a founding forced to flee and refugee conflict, refugees, women. member. camps were set up along the Thai-Burma border. •KWO was founded as a way for women to contribute to the revolution. The first KWO focused on social President of the KNU, Saw Ba The Karen Women's Organisation (KWO) was formed U Gyi initiated the formation welfare needs in the in 1949 and re-organised in 1985. Currently KWO has community, and supporting and his wife was the first Chairwoman. the Karen Revolution. a membership of more than 70,000 women living in Kawthoolei, Burma and in refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. KWO is a leading indigenous 1949 1985 women's organisation working in protection and

January 31st: The Karen

Revolution started.

our programs directly serve women, girls, children,

and the most vulnerable people in our community.