



Karen Women Organization

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Karen Women's Organization calls for increased international pressure to end SPDC military offensives

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The Karen Women's Organization is gravely concerned at the renewed displacement and suffering of civilians caused by the Burmese regime's latest military offensive in Pa-An District of Karen State, and calls for increased international pressure to bring an immediate end to the fighting.

Since June 2, 2009, troops from five battalions of the regime, the State Peace Development Council (SPDC) and three battalions of the Democratic Buddhist Karen Army (DKBA) have been shelling and attacking villages close to the Thai border. This has caused almost 4,000 villagers from 20 villages, mostly women and children, to flee to Thailand.

Among the Karen refugees, over 800 are children under thirteen years old, including over twenty breastfeeding babies. There are also 20 pregnant women. The KWO is deeply concerned for the health and welfare of these vulnerable populations, particularly during the onset of the rainy season.

"People have fled with frighten and exhaustion said KWO spokesperson Blooming Night Zan. "I saw one mother struggling to care for her two-day-old baby. It made me so sad and angry with the SPDC and DKBA for carrying out these attacks."

Time and again our people have been forcibly uprooted by such attacks of the military regime. This cycle of displacement and suffering must be brought to an end.

We therefore urgently appeal to foreign governments to use all means, including UN Security Council intervention, to pressure the SPDC to immediately stop this current offensive, withdraw all SPDC and DKBA troops from rural Karen areas, and impose a nationwide ceasefire. A tripartite dialogue process between the regime, the National League for Democracy and ethnic representatives, must be initiated to bring peace and democratic reform to Burma.

We also appeal to the Thai government to continue to provide protection to refugees fleeing from Burma and allow them entry into refugee camps.

KWO is a community-based organization of Karen women working in development and relief in the refugee camps on the Thai border and with IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) inside Burma. KWO aims to empower Karen women in all spheres of life, including education and general living standards, and to develop women's knowledge, and skills in politics and leadership.

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