

## **Karen Community of the Republic of Korea Condemns Burma Military Airstrikes in Karen State and Urges the Kingdom of Thailand to Immediately Accept Karen Refugees**

### ***Statement by Karen Community of the Republic of Korea***

2 April 2021

The Karen Community of the Republic of Korea strongly condemns the ongoing Burma military airstrikes in Mutraw (Hpapun) District, Karen State, Burma. On the night of March 27, the Burma Air Force jets dropped bombs on Day Bu Noh village, claiming the lives of at least three civilians while severely injuring seven others. On the very same day in Burma, the brutal crackdown on protesters and unconscionable attacks on civilians continued in numerous cities. At least 114 people were killed, including children below the age of 10.

Burmese military airstrikes in Karen State continued on March 28. On March 29, Ler Htoo village was attacked with missiles and Daw Koo Hta high school was obliterated. These premeditated attacks on human lives and the calculated destruction of civilian property constitute war crimes. The Burmese military has failed to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, and have instead unleashed an unprecedented brand of violence on the very people they are duty-bound to protect. More than 12,000 villagers have had to abandon their homes and their livelihood to seek refuge in the jungle as violence continues to escalate unabated, and the numbers grow daily.

Following the onslaught of attacks, over 2,500 Karen villagers crossed into Thailand where the Thai authorities forced them back despite ongoing aerial attacks. Barbwire fences were put in place to prevent civilians seeking refuge; these included elderly people and mothers with young babies. Turning away those in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and protection is diametrically opposed to the principle of non-refoulement and the internationally recognized rights of refugees.

Recommendations to the government of the Kingdom of Thailand:

1. **Receive displaced civilians fleeing the ravages of war:** Thai authorities must reaffirm their commitment to the principle of non-refoulement and the internationally recognized rights of refugees.
2. **Provide humanitarian support:** prioritize support for civil society organizations and aid organizations providing cross-border humanitarian assistance for IDPS and refugees who remain displaced by ongoing Burmese military violence across the country.
3. **Desist in providing supplies to Burma Army:** the Burma Army has been relentlessly attacking civilians, and to provide them with any supply would be to support their violent acts.