

BURMA: Letter to UN Human Right Council Concerning Ethnic Minorities

February 11, 2021

To: Member and Observer States of the United Nations Human Rights Council Regarding the Crisis in Burma

Re: Open Letter from Community Organizations Calling for Action Regarding Burma to Support Ethnic Nationalities and Prioritize Human Rights

Dear Excellences,

We are writing to express our deep concern regarding the continuing attacks and atrocities committed against ethnic minorities in Burma by the Burma military (Burma Army), the brazen coup d'état executed by the Burma Army on February 1 to subvert the results of a free and fair election and the Burma Army's retaliation against peaceful protesters since February 1.

The Burma Army's coup and subsequent violent crackdown on peaceful protesters demonstrate to the world what ethnic minorities have learned from decades of a brutal campaign against them: The Burma Army operates with complete autonomy and is guided only by its own self-interest. We urge the international community to act immediately and decisively to protest the Burma Army's long-standing and serious violations of the human rights of the people of Burma and to protect ethnic minorities and peaceful demonstrators exercising their fundamental human rights.

Specifically, we would like to draw your attention to the atrocities routinely committed against ethnic groups for decades and which continue unabated. Since January 1 of this year, the Burma Army has displaced over [5326 Karen people](#), after shelling villages and blocking humanitarian aid. Approximately [130,000 Rohingya](#) continue to fear for their lives as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Rakhine state; fighting incited by the Burma Army has displaced close to [236,000 Rakhine civilians](#) since 2018, and, on January 25, IDPs in Rakhine state were ordered to leave the camps sheltering them and relocate with no place to go. Conflict in Rakhine state has bled into neighboring Chin state, where more than [60,000 Chin IDPs](#) have fled violence. In Burma's Shan state, clashes led to the destruction and displacement of [1,000 villagers](#) December 2020. As of January 2021, over [104,010 in Kachin and northern Shan state](#) remain in displacement camps nearly a decade after being forcibly driven from their homes due to a ceasefire broken by the Burma Army. Though the Burma Army denied responsibility for the human rights violations documented by the CSOs on the ground, UN, international organizations and many others have proven otherwise. The Army also continues to forcibly conscript villagers as porters and guides, a practice often linked to other violations, including [torture and sexual abuses](#) as well as gender-based violence. While there may be less sounds of the guns, in Karenni state, the Burma Army has confiscated some [50,000 acres](#) of land from ethnic Karenni people, even [prosecuting farmers](#) who attempted to cultivate their stolen land. Similar issues exist in Mon state, where a single township reported over [7,000 acres](#) being confiscated by the Burma Army. It is evident that the Burma Army commits a multitude of violations, ranging from violence and atrocities to land-grabbing and forced displacement.

This laundry list of atrocities demonstrates that the international community must act now to protect lives in Burma, not only the lives of brave protesters who are exercising their fundamental human rights but also those of ethnic minorities who are threatened every day by military actions.

We, 165 Burma's ethnic organizations, urge Member and Observer States of the UN Human Rights Council in your February 12th Special Session on the human rights implications of the crisis in Myanmar to adopt a Resolution to:

1. Establish immediate and regular monitoring and evaluation of the situation in Burma, including by dispatching a delegation to Burma (including the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar) to observe, document and report on the situation and by requiring regular reporting to the Human Rights Council and other UN mechanisms;

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2. Provide immediate humanitarian aid and direct cross-border assistance to adequately address the humanitarian needs of all IDPs and refugees suffering from ongoing Burma Army militarization and offensives;
3. Suspend all political and financial support to the Burma Army and the peace process, including the Joint Peace Fund;
4. Impose immediate sanctions against the Burma Army, both individually and as an institution, and against military-owned and -controlled companies and their affiliates, as recommended by the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar;
5. Support the establishment of a comprehensive response to ensure long-term federal democratic and human rights change in the country, including by ensuring support towards constitutional change that would bring the military under civilian control and ensure accountability for grave human rights violations.

Additionally, we call on the United Nations, Human Rights Council and Member and Observer States, both collectively and individually, to pressure the Burma Army to:

1. Stop offensives throughout the country, pull back troops in ethnic areas, respect the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and proceed with political or tripartite dialogue;
2. Immediately allow all humanitarian aid to affected areas, including ethnic areas;
3. Immediately and unconditionally release State Counsellor Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and all arbitrarily detained political prisoners, including those who won seats in the recent 2020 election;
4. Cease all violence and use of force in response to protests, lift all declarations of Martial Law, curfews and other restrictions imposed under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedures Act and allow for the full exercise of the fundamental right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly;
5. Allow unrestricted access throughout Burma to all internet services, media platforms and other forms of communications;
6. Allow the parliament elected by the will of the people in November 2020 to take office and allow elected representatives to fulfil their mandate without impediment.

We thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent matter.

Should you have question, please contact us at: myradah@uscampaignforburma.org.

Sincerely,

Community Organizations inside Burma and Thailand-Burma Border

- 1 Back Pack Health Worker Team
- 2 All Arakan Students' and Youths Congress
- 3 Assistance Association of Political Prisoners
- 4 Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters
- 5 Chin Human Rights Organization
- 6 Dawn Peace Foundation
- 7 Future Light Center
- 8 Htoi Gender and Development Foundation
- 9 Human Rights Foundation of Monland - Burma
- 10 Humanity Institute
- 11 Humanity Institute Organization
- 12 Kachin Peace Network
- 13 Kachin Refugee Committee
- 14 Kachin Women Peace Network
- 15 Kachin Women's Association Thailand
- 16 Karen Affairs Committee
- 17 Karen Environmental and Social Action Network
- 18 Karen Human Right Organization

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- 19 Karen Lawyers Network
- 20 Karen Organization for Relief and Development
- 21 Karen Peace Support Network
- 22 Karen Refugee Committee
- 23 Karen River Watch
- 24 Karen Student Network Group
- 25 Karen Teacher Working Group
- 26 Karen Women Organization
- 27 Karen Youth- Rangoon
- 28 Karenni National Women Organization
- 29 Karenni Refugee Committee
- 30 Keng Tung Youth
- 31 Loka Ahlinn
- 32 Maramagri Youth Network
- 33 Myanmar People Alliance (Shan State)
- 34 NeT Organization
- 35 Network for Human Rights Documentation Burma
- 36 Pa-O Youth Organization
- 37 Progressive Voice
- 38 Research and Translation Consultancy Cluster
- 39 Shan MATA
- 40 Southern Youth Development Organization
- 41 Synergy Social Harmony Organization
- 42 Ta'ang Women's Organization
- 43 Women Leagues of Burma
- 44 Youth Circle

Community Organizations Abroad

- 45 Albany Karen community, NY, USA
- 46 Arakan American Community, USA
- 47 Arakan Institute for Peace and Development, Houston, TX, USA
- 48 Burma Center, Springfield, MI, USA
- 49 Burmese Christian Fellowship, Boston, MA, USA
- 50 California Karen Youth Forum, Oakland, CA, USA
- 51 California Shan Society, San Francisco, CA, USA
- 52 Chin Youth of Tomorrow, USA
- 53 Citizen for Burma Award, Boston, MA, USA
- 54 Dallas Kachin Community, Dallas, TX, USA
- 55 Dallas Karen Baptist Church, Dallas, TX, USA
- 56 Dallas Karen Community, Dallas, TX, USA
- 57 DEEKU, the Karenni Community, USA
- 58 Eastern Pennsylvania Karen Community, Philadelphia, PA, USA
- 59 Ebenezer Karen Baptist Church, St. Paul, MN, USA
- 60 International Campaigns for Arakan, Washington, DC, USA
- 61 Jury's Child Care, Cozad, NE , USA
- 62 Kachin Alliance, Washington, DC, USA
- 63 Kachin National organization US, Dallas, TX, USA
- 64 Kansas Karenni community, KS, USA
- 65 Karen American Association of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI, USA
- 66 Karen Association of Huron, SD, USA
- 67 Karen Baptist Churches, USA
- 68 Karen Baptist of West Chicago, IL , USA

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- 69 Karen Community in South Carolina, Columbia, SC, USA
- 70 Karen Community in Syracuse, NY, USA
- 71 Karen Community of Akron, OH, USA
- 72 Karen Community of Austin, Texas, USA
- 73 Karen Community of Charlotte, NC, USA
- 74 Karen Community of Georgia, GA, USA
- 75 Karen Community of Greensboro, NC, USA
- 76 Karen Community of Iowa, IA, USA
- 77 Karen Community of Kansas City, KS & MO, USA
- 78 Karen Community of Louisville, KY, USA
- 79 Karen Community of Minnesota, MN, USA
- 80 Karen Community of New Bern, NC, USA
- 81 Karen Community of North Carolina, NC, USA
- 82 Karen Community of Rochester, Rochester, NY, USA
- 83 Karen Community of Rock Island, IL, USA
- 84 Karen Organization of America, USA
- 85 Karen Organization of Illinois, IL, USA
- 86 Karen Society of Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, USA
- 87 Karen Society of Nebraska, NE, USA
- 88 Karen Student Association, Omaha, NE, USA
- 89 Karen Student Organization, St. Paul, MN, USA
- 90 Karen Student United Association, St. Cloud, MN, USA
- 91 Karen Youth Education Pathways, USA
- 92 Karenni American Association, St. Paul, MN, USA
- 93 Karenni Community of Bowling Green, KY, USA
- 94 Karenni community of Des Moines, IA, USA
- 95 Karenni Community of Georgia, GA, USA
- 96 Karenni community of Indianapolis, IN, USA
- 97 Karenni Community of Massachusetts, MA, USA
- 98 Karenni community of Minnesota, MN, USA
- 99 Karenni Community of Missouri, MO, USA
- 100 Karenni Community of New York, NY, USA
- 101 Karenni Community of North Carolina, NC, USA
- 102 Karenni Community of Portland, OR, USA
- 103 Karenni Community of Taxes, TX, USA
- 104 Karenni Community of Wisconsin, WI, USA
- 105 Karenni Society of Minnesota, MN, USA
- 106 Karenni-American Catholic Association, USA
- 107 Louisville Karen Baptist Church, Louisville, KY, USA
- 108 Lowell International Church, Lowell, MA, USA
- 109 Marshall Karen Community, MN, USA
- 110 Massachusetts Baptists Multicultural Ministries Inc, Boston, MA, USA
- 111 Mon America Association, USA
- 112 Nationalities Alliance of Burma USA
- 113 Nazareth Karen Baptist Church, St. Paul, MN, USA
- 114 Overseas Burmese Christian Fellowship, Allston, MA, USA
- 115 Richmond Kachin Community, Richmond, VA, USA
- 116 Rohingya American Society, Milwaukee, WI, USA
- 117 Rohingya Culture Center of Chicago, IL, USA
- 118 Rohingya Society of Greater Nashua, NH, USA
- 119 Tee Moo Ler Karen Baptist Church, DuPage County, IL, USA
- 120 The Urban Village, St. Paul, MN, USA

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- 121 Utica Karen Community, Utica, NY, USA
- 122 Washington Kachin Community, Seattle, WA, USA
- 123 World Rohingya Organization, Jackson Height, NY, USA
- 124 Zion Karen Baptist Church of Albert Lea, MN, USA
- 125 Zomi Innkuan USA
- 126 Zomi International Communities Organization, Tulsa, OK, USA
- 127 Mid-Atlantic Kachin Community, USA
- 128 Atlanta Kachin Community, Atlanta, GA, USA
- 129 Jacksonville Kachin Community, Jacksonville, FL, USA
- 130 Calvary Burmese Church, Washington, DC, USA
- 131 Calgary Karen Community Association, Canada
- 132 Canadian Burma Ethnic Nationalities Organization, Canada
- 133 Edmonton Karen Community Youth Organization, Canada
- 134 European Karen Network
- 135 Finland Karen Culture Association
- 136 International Karen Organisation, Australia
- 137 Kachin Canadian Association
- 138 Karen Community Association-UK
- 139 Karen Community in Norway
- 140 Karen Community of Canada
- 141 Karen Community of Czech Republic
- 142 Karen Community of Finland
- 143 Karen Community of Hamilton
- 144 Karen Community of Ireland
- 145 Karen Community of Israel
- 146 Karen Community of Kitchener & Waterloo, Canada
- 147 Karen Community of Lamington, Canada
- 148 Karen Community of Lethbridge, Canada
- 149 Karen Community of London, Canada
- 150 Karen Community of Ottawa, Canada
- 151 Karen Community of Regina, Canada
- 152 Karen Community of Saskatoon, Canada
- 153 Karen Community of Thunderbay, Canada
- 154 Karen Community of Toronto, Canada
- 155 Karen Community of Windsor, Canada
- 156 Karen Community of Winnipeg, Canada
- 157 Karen Community Society of British Columbia, Canada
- 158 Karen Swedish Community
- 159 Karen Thai Group, Thailand
- 160 Karen Youth of Norway
- 161 Karen Youth of Toronto, Canada
- 162 KNU Concerned Group, Burma
- 163 Korea Karen Organization
- 164 Korea Karen Youth Organization
- 165 Oversea Karen Organization Japan