



Karen Human Rights Report Launch Blocked

Chiang Mai, 25th April: An event covering the current, unfolding humanitarian crisis in Karen State's Mutraw (Hpapun) District has been cancelled. Karen Peace Support Network's (KPSN) report launch event, tabled for today, was planned to raise awareness about the plight of more than 2,400 Internally Displaced People (IDP) recently forced from their land and homes in Mutraw's Luthaw township by the Burma Army.

On 4th March 2018, the Burma Army launched a new military operation in Luthaw with the stated objective of expanding a military operations road. Since these operations began, the Burma Army has deployed at least eight light infantry battalions into Karen National Union (KNU) controlled areas, without "prior agreement" from the KNU or the Karen National Liberation Army's (KNLA) 5th Brigade, in breach of the spirit and letter of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). The KNU signed the NCA in October 2015 along with eight other Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs). The NCA clearly calls on all parties to the NCA to prioritise "political dialogue instead of force of arms", requiring that both parties "confine their troops within the designated areas," stipulating that the "movement of armed troops in the areas controlled by the other is allowed only after obtaining prior agreement."

The Burma Army's current military operations have provoked dozens of armed clashes with troops of the KNLA and forcibly displaced more than 2,400 people from their lands and homes. As the Burma Army is showing no sign of withdrawing from their offensive positions, these Karen IDPs are now facing the spectre of protracted displacement, and severe food and physical insecurity. Both the KNU and the KNLA's 5th Brigade have officially denounced the Burma Army for breaching the terms of the NCA. They are calling on the Burma Army to cease its military operations, withdraw its Military Operations Commands (MOCs) and the battalions under them, and prioritise negotiations and political dialogue to guarantee peace and security for Karen Internally Displaced People.

The corpus of today's event was to inform the world about the ongoing human rights abuses against the Karen people, but it was also organised to provide a platform for Karen and other concerned communities to raise support for IDPs and to work towards a peaceful resolution to what has now been 70 years of armed conflict.

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