



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

**November 15<sup>th</sup> 2019**

## **Beyond the Horizon: Local Perspectives on Peace, Justice and Accountability in Southeast Myanmar**

Today, at the Myanmar Press Freedom Center in Yangon, the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) launched its latest report, '*Beyond the Horizon: Local Perspectives on Peace, Justice and Accountability in Southeast Myanmar*'. This report explores the issue of transitional justice by examining the legacy of past human rights violations and the current human rights situation in Southeast Burma/Myanmar, as well as the perspectives of 95 local villagers on the peace process and access to justice.

In 2015, the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement created possibilities for positive change after decades of conflict. However, the consequences of past abuses continue to impact the daily lives of local people, often combining with new forms of abuses to compound their economic marginalisation. As the peace process is now at a deadlock, it remains unclear to what extent it will be able to address these issues.

Although most respondents reported that they now feel safer, problems persist. Traditional forms of abuses, such as killings, sexual and gender-based violence, physical abuse, forced labour and extortion still occur. In addition, the rights of rural Karen communities over natural resources and land are being totally disregarded. The Tatmadaw is also increasing its presence across the region, and skirmishes between armed actors undermine the local people's trust in the peace process.

Respondents reported that, during the pre-ceasefire period, they were often prevented from accessing justice by their rightful fear of armed actors, a lack of judicial independence and rule of law, and the absence of civilian jurisdiction over Tatmadaw abuses. In the current ceasefire period, villagers are also being denied justice because the parallel justice systems existing in Southeast Burma/Myanmar are inconsistent, lack resources and are plagued by corruption.

KHRG's Programme Director Naw Htoo Htoo emphasised that: "*So far, little has been done to ensure that victims of human rights violations and abuses have access to justice. The peace process in Southeast Burma/Myanmar should not move forward without considering fair, impartial, effective, and independent justice mechanisms to hold accountable perpetrators of past human rights abuses. In addition, the KNU and Burma/Myanmar government should take the necessary measures to ensure that their justice systems can deliver justice to the victims of current human rights abuses in a satisfactory way.*"

Through this report, KHRG hopes that national and international stakeholders will gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by villagers of Southeast Burma/Myanmar in terms of human rights and access to justice. Through a comprehensive set of recommendations, it calls on the Burma/Myanmar government to take meaningful measures to increase accountability for past, present, and future human rights violations.

The full report is available [at LINK](#). For more information, please contact:  
Saw Nanda Hsue ([hsue@khrq.org](mailto:hsue@khrq.org) , +95 9 776753790).  
Naw Htoo Htoo ([hoothu@khrq.org](mailto:hoothu@khrq.org), +95 9 774270479)