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For immediate release:

ASEAN Must Match Its Engagement with Burma to the Regime's Actions

The Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN) is deeply concerned by the widening gap between ASEAN's stated commitment to peace in Burma and the military regime's continued attacks on civilians.

During the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting with the regime on 12 July 2026, ASEAN reaffirmed its commitment to the Five-Point Consensus, beginning with the urgent need for an **immediate end to violence**. This commitment must mean more than words. It requires concrete de-escalation of violence, an immediate cessation of hostilities, and an end to the military's deliberate attacks on civilians.

Instead, the Burma Army responded by escalating its campaign of violence.

On **July 12th 2026**, the day before ASEAN ministers held informal talks with their Burma counterpart, a Burma Army jet-fighter dropped 4 bombs and Y-12 aircraft dropped 36 bombs onto Ter Ghaw Kyo, Luthaw township, Mutraw district. **The bombs injured a boy aged 8, 2 men aged 19 and 41, and a woman, aged 35, destroying 16 houses, one rice barn and two motorbikes.**

On **July 13th 2026**, a Burma Army Y-12 aircraft dropped 22 bombs onto Ler K'taw, He Au, Shel Day and Mor Pu villages, Moo township, Kler Lwee Htu district. **The bombs killed 2 women, aged 65 and 57, and destroyed 2 shops.**

Even today, air bombardments continue across several districts of Kawthoolei, forcing families to flee and live in constant fear.

These attacks demonstrate that the military regime has no intention of implementing the first and most fundamental element of ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus. Rather than de-escalating violence, it has intensified its attacks immediately following ASEAN's engagement.

ASEAN must unequivocally condemn these attacks and hold the Burma Army accountable for its actions. Diplomatic engagement should not become a reward for continued war crimes against civilians. There should be **no normalization or official engagement with the regime unless it demonstrates, through verifiable actions, that it has stopped attacking civilians and is implementing the Five-Point Consensus.**

For more than five years, ASEAN has repeatedly heard promises from the Burma Army, yet civilians continue to suffer under relentless airstrikes, artillery attacks, arbitrary arrests, and widespread human rights violations. ASEAN should judge the regime not by its statements, but by its actions.

As the Karen saying goes, **"Talking to the Burma Army is like talking to an eel—it has no ears."** The military has consistently ignored appeals for peace because its priority has never been the safety of the people, but the preservation of its power, wealth and greed. ASEAN must not be misled by empty promises. Instead, it should focus on whether the regime is genuinely implementing the Five-Point Consensus, beginning with an immediate cessation of violence.

"How can the people of Burma—or the country's ethnic resistance organizations—be expected to trust the military in any peace process when its actions move in the opposite direction? Every airstrike against civilians further erodes confidence and demonstrates the regime's lack of commitment to genuine peace," said Naw Wah Khu Shee of the Karen Peace Support Network.

If ASEAN is serious about peace, it must place pressure where it belongs: on the Burma Army. Too often, calls for restraint are directed equally at all parties, while the military continues to conduct airstrikes, shell civilian communities, and obstruct humanitarian assistance with impunity. This false equivalence undermines the credibility of ASEAN's peace efforts.

A genuine ceasefire cannot exist while the Burma Army continues to bomb villages from the air. Nor can meaningful peace talks begin under the constant threat of aerial attacks against civilians.

ASEAN's engagement must be conditional, principled, and based on measurable actions—not promises. The first benchmark should be clear: **an immediate and verifiable end to attacks on civilians.** Until the military demonstrates this commitment, there can be no genuine ceasefire, no meaningful political dialogue, and no sustainable path to peace.

KPSN is the largest Karen civil society network consisting of 22 organizations in Burma and Thailand. Its members have supported vulnerable people and communities in this conflict-torn region for decades, striving to empower local communities, building transparent and accountable institutions, and helping to create sustainable and equitable peace in Burma.

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