



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

World Humanitarian Day

19 August 2017

Today, 19 August 2017, is World Humanitarian Day. This year's theme is dedicated to reaffirm that civilians who are caught in an armed conflict are **#NotATarget**. Globally the United Nations and different humanitarian partners are raising their voices together to advocate for the most vulnerable people in areas of armed conflict and demand on governments and world leaders to do everything in their power to protect civilians in conflict.

In Myanmar, including Karen areas in southeast Myanmar, civilians are still suffering from consequences of armed conflict as clashes continue between the Myanmar army (Tatmadaw) and their Border Guard Forces (BGFs) against ethnic armed organisations. In Kayin/Karen State, most recently there were clashes between a splinter group of the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), and the Tatmadaw and its BGFs. Since July 2015, the clashes have led to displacement of more than 6,000 civilians, of whom a lot are still living in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) sites in Myaing Gyi Ngu, Kayin State and in villages away from the conflict areas.

Civilians are afraid to return due to ongoing armed clashes, presence of military actors, and also because of contamination with both old and new planted landmines and unexploded ordnance in and around their villages as well as livelihood areas. In addition, more than 2,000 civilians affected by armed conflict in previous years are still displaced in Ei Htu Hta IDP camp in Kayin/Karen State, near the border with Thailand. These IDPs will largely stop receiving humanitarian aid by the end of September 2017.

The government, army and any ethnic armed organisation should always place the interests of civilians before their own agendas.

Therefore, KHRG joins the global call to reaffirm civilians are **#NotATarget** and calls on all the humanitarian actors to support civilians affected by armed conflict in Myanmar and worldwide.

Please read KHRG's recent reports and interviews with local community members on ongoing conflict and militarisation in southeast Myanmar and how it affects civilians and their human rights.

#NotATarget

KHRG, '[Recent fighting between newly-reformed DKBA and joint forces of BGF and Tatmadaw soldiers led more than six thousand Karen villagers to flee in Hpa-an District, September 2016,](#)' 2 December 2016.

KHRG, '[Hpa-an Short Update: Hlaingbwe Township, March to October 2016,](#)' 6 April 2017

KHRG, '[Hpa-an Situation Update: Hlaingbwe Township, Paingkyon Township and Nabu Township, March to May 2017,](#)' 8 August 2017.

KHRG, '[Dooplaya Interview: Naw G---, September 2016,](#)' 14 December 2016.

KHRG, '[Ongoing militarisation in southeast Myanmar,](#)' 20 October 2016.

KHRG, '[Beautiful Words, Ugly Actions: The Asian Highway in Karen State, Burma,](#)' 26 August 2016.



This photo was taken by a community member on October 10th 2016 at D--- village, Meh Proo village tract, Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District. It shows temporary huts and shelters which were built for villagers who were displaced from the fighting from the Meh Th'Waw area. [Photo: KHRG]



This photo was taken by a KHRG community member on October 7th 2016 at a camp for displaced villagers in Myaing Gyi Ngu Town, Hlaingbwe Township, Hpa-an District. The photo shows temporary shelters that have been built for villagers who fled from the fighting in Meh Th'Waw area. [Photo: KHRG]

#NotATarget