



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Dreaming of Home, Hoping for Peace: Protracted Displacement in Southeast Myanmar

Today, at Diamond Condominium in Yangon, the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) launched its latest report, *'Dreaming of Home, Hoping for Peace: Protracted displacement in Southeast Myanmar'*. This report provides an assessment of the humanitarian situation in Myaing Gyi Ngu (Hpa-an District). It analyses the living conditions of IDPs, the reasons for their displacement and the barriers preventing them from returning to their villages. This report aims to highlight how, despite the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), conflict-related displacement remains a major issue in Southeast Myanmar.

Since 2016, 5,610 IDPs have been living in makeshift shelters in Myaing Gyi Ngu, where they lack access to adequate food, water, safe sanitary conditions, basic necessities and work opportunities. Because of inadequate food support, some IDPs have been injured while scavenging for vegetables in landmine-contaminated areas.

82% of respondents said that landmine contamination is preventing them from returning to their village. Sporadic armed clashes and continued militarisation are other barriers to return for IDPs in Myaing Gyi Ngu. KHRG's Senior Advocacy Coordinator, Saw Way Lay, pointed out that little had been done to address these issues: *"We must recognise that the peace process has failed to deliver on its promises. The Myanmar Government, the Karen National Union and all relevant armed actors must commit to peace and the safe and voluntary return of displaced populations. The Myanmar government must take the necessary measures to meet the needs of displaced populations and ensure that their dignity is restored."*

In addition, KHRG recommends that the Myanmar Government and the Karen National Union cooperate closely to create the necessary conditions to allow IDPs to return home and live peaceful and sustainable lives. KHRG's Programme Director Naw Htoo Htoo emphasised that *"It is particularly important to provide the future returnees with financial support to allow them to secure their livelihoods in their areas of origin. Failure to do that will only result in more hardship and uncertainty for them, and could trigger further displacement for economic reasons."*

Through this report, KHRG hopes that national and international stakeholders will gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by thousands of IDPs in Myaing Gyi Ngu. Through a comprehensive set of action-oriented recommendations, it urges all relevant stakeholders to take the necessary measures to alleviate their suffering, ensure their dignified return and tackle the root causes of displacement in Southeast Myanmar. For decades, conflict-related displacement has been an integral part of life in the region, resulting in countless humanitarian crises. No efforts should be spared to put an end to protracted displacement.

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