



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

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## **Job Vacancy Announcement: Research Fellow**

October 2017

The Research Fellow will assist with the ongoing implementation of KHRG's Raw Data Project, and lend support to research and advocacy projects. KHRG's Raw Data Project aims to publish information on the human rights situation in southeast Burma/Myanmar, exactly as it is received from the field, subject only to minor edits for clarity and security. The Research Fellow supports the organisation's research and advocacy efforts at the local and international levels by assisting with human rights documentation, report writing activities, as well as the standardisation of these processes. Local priorities and perspectives on the general human rights situation in Burma/Myanmar will determine the focus of reports. Currently, KHRG field documentation often describes land confiscation and displacement arising from development projects; militarisation and sporadic clashes between armed groups; local perspectives on healthcare and education and changes in the general human rights situation now that the Karen National Union (KNU) has signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) with the Burma/Myanmar government.

KHRG operates on a consensus basis and the position holder will work as part of a small team for each report. Thus, team-working skills, a positive attitude and sense of humour are important. Applicants should also be highly motivated, able to work with little supervision and should have experience conducting research and advocacy on human rights issues, preferably in southeast Asia. A strong commitment to helping rural people claim their human rights and a willingness to be guided by locally defined perspectives and priorities at all times is essential. Applicants with an interest in expanding their understanding of human rights issues in rural southeast Burma/Myanmar, especially those interested in challenging traditional conceptions of human rights that privilege international legal frameworks, should find the position particularly attractive.

This position is based in KHRG's information processing office in Thailand and the post holder should be prepared to commit at least 6 months to KHRG.

**Note: KHRG is seeking one Research Fellow for a 6-month period, ideally beginning in the first week of January 2017. Due to the high volume of applications received, only short-listed candidates will be contacted to answer preliminary questions, and considered for interview.**

**Research Fellow Responsibilities:**

1. Support the Information Processing and Report-writing Team (IPRT) as they process human rights documentation from the field and use it to produce English-language human rights reports, including:
  - Editing translated documents and human rights reports;
  - Giving feedback and working with individuals and/or groups to build local staff's capacity, including English language proficiency, research and report-writing skills. The Research Fellow will be responsible for conducting a minimum of two capacity-building workshops for the entire IPRT based on needs identified by local staff (i.e. report-writing, public-speaking, Excel skills or other workshops); as well as bi-monthly one-on-one capacity building sessions with each of the Information Processing and Report Writing officers.
  - Assisting in the development of report-writing teaching materials;
  - Supporting the on-going systematisation and standardisation of KHRG's reporting processes;
  - Assisting the IPRT with other duties as needed.
  
2. Support the IPRT, Research and Advocacy teams by conducting research, including into national and international legal issues, access to justice and the rule of law, and national public institutions related to human rights in Burma/Myanmar; writing portions of thematic and regional human rights reports; compiling KHRG reports for thematic submissions; drafting and editing policy and advocacy briefs and supporting local staff in advocating with civil society partners, donors and authorities in Burma/Myanmar, as required. Such responsibilities will be allocated based on the Research Fellow's interest and expertise, as well as internal management decisions.

3. Play a key role in the process of recruiting and training new Research Fellows by reviewing applications, selecting candidates for interview, interviewing potential candidates, and training new Research Fellows for a two-week period prior to departure.

*Note that candidates lacking prior knowledge of the situation facing rural communities in southeast Burma/Myanmar must be willing to work to develop the necessary expertise, including by:*

Committing to preparatory research before beginning work and conducting research outside of working hours after beginning work with KHRG. KHRG will provide a list of reading materials to assist the successful applicant in developing an understanding of the key issues facing people in rural southeast Burma/Myanmar and the different human rights and development frameworks used to frame these issues, as well as KHRG's own research and report-writing style and best practices guides. It is essential that the incoming fellow have an understanding of the history and issues in Burma/Myanmar as a whole in order to help contextualise the issues in Karen State.

### **Essential knowledge, skills and abilities**

1. Excellent oral and written communication skills in English, including the ability to adapt communication style to different audiences. Native English language speaker or equivalent proficiency is required.
2. Attention to detail, including conscientious editing that accurately retains the tone and meaning of the original document.
3. Excellent writing skills and the ability to draft sections of analytical reports.
4. Positive attitude, including patience, a willingness to be flexible, take initiative and use problem-solving skills, and to accept feedback and make adjustments to improve performance.
5. Teaching and capacity building skills, both in a one-on-one or on-the-job context and through organising formal lessons.
6. Self-motivation, self-discipline, organisation and time-management skills, as well as ability to function under pressure. This includes meeting deadlines and responding promptly to job-related tasks, as well as balancing long-term organisational objectives with immediate and routine tasks.
7. Ability to work independently and in teams in a multicultural working environment.

8. Knowledge about international human rights standards, mechanisms and practices.
9. Good knowledge of standard computer applications such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point), Internet and email applications.

### **Desirable knowledge, skills and abilities**

1. Knowledge of the human rights situation in Burma/Myanmar, with specific knowledge of the situation as it affects rural communities in southeast Burma/Myanmar and domestic law.
2. Expertise in writing human rights reports, or similar writing projects.
3. Some knowledge of Karen, Burmese and/or Thai language.
4. Knowledge of Adobe's Creative Suite, including Photoshop or InDesign.
5. Knowledge of website design and maintenance (HTML, FTP) and other IT functions such as networking and general computer maintenance.
6. Experience processing and analysing information using a database.
7. Knowledge about on-going debates in the field of human rights on internal displacement, Burmese politics, development and related issues in southeast Burma/Myanmar.

### **Salary and support**

KHRG operates on a consensus basis and has an egalitarian salary system that does not discriminate between local and expatriate staff. The Research Fellow is not a salaried member of staff, but the position will be supported with a stipend to cover basic living expenses. In the past, some fellows have gone on to fill full-time salaried positions, subject to the current needs of the organisation, as well as the availability of funds.

Successful applicants will have an opportunity to be involved in the production of human rights reports and make a large contribution to the struggle for human rights in Burma/Myanmar.

KHRG is able to cover visa costs during the period of work and cover the cost of accommodation for the first seven days after arrival. Research Fellows will be provided with a bicycle for transport, as well as a pre-arrival guide, which includes information to

assist the Research Fellow in obtaining a visa, travelling within Thailand, and finding accommodation.

KHRG will provide an initial orientation and the Fellow will be given access to KHRG's research materials. While KHRG will provide guidance throughout the fellowship, Research Fellows are expected to have a high level of self-motivation and the ability to independently identify tasks and team priorities.

### **How to Apply**

Please submit a CV (3 page maximum), cover letter (1 page), and relevant writing sample to [applications@khr.org](mailto:applications@khr.org). The cover letter should describe your academic and professional experience as it relates to the Research Fellow responsibilities and the knowledge, skills and abilities requirements above.

**Application deadline: October 23, 2017**

### **About KHRG**

The Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) is a grassroots, locally led human rights organisation established in Karen State in 1992 and now operating across two states and two regions in southeast Burma/Myanmar. KHRG works with villagers in rural Burma/Myanmar to strengthen their ability to claim their human rights, documents their human rights situation and conducts international advocacy. More information about KHRG and our work is available online at [www.facebook.com/karenhumanrightsgroup](https://www.facebook.com/karenhumanrightsgroup)