



Karen Human Rights Group
Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

Par Gyi Killing Highlights Continuing Impunity in Southeast Myanmar

Press release

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The recent killing by the Myanmar Army of the journalist Aung Kyaw Naing, also known as Par Gyi, highlights the need to end impunity in Southeast Myanmar, according to the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG), a leading community based organisation in the region.

The killing of Par Gyi shows that the Myanmar Army still has a long way to go to ensure that its soldiers do not perpetrate grave human rights abuses. According to a number of credible media and other reports, citing documents from the Myanmar Army, Par Gyi was shot dead whilst in the custody of soldiers from Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion #208, led by battalion commander San Min Aung on October 4th 2014, after he was arrested in Shwe Wan Chaw village, Kyaikmayaw Township. The Tatmadaw has not provided any evidence to support its claim that Par Gyi was shot and killed during an attempt to seize a gun from a Tatmadaw soldier and escape. KHRG welcomes the news that President Thein Sein has ordered the National Human Rights Commission to investigate Par Gyi's killing. The Government must now ensure that this investigation is independent, thorough and credible. We urge the Myanmar government to open investigations into the many other reported cases of abuse in Karen areas as well.

"The alleged murder of Par Gyi is a deeply disturbing reminder that the Myanmar Army continues to act as if it can do whatever it wants with impunity. The Myanmar government has an obligation to investigate this case and bring the perpetrators to justice, as well as to investigate the many other allegations of human rights abuses by its military in ethnic areas." Said Saw Albert, Field director, Karen Human Rights Group.

KHRG's commentary "[Replacing Impunity with Accountability](#)," released in October 2014, demonstrates that many of the abuses that characterized the armed conflict in Southeast Myanmar have continued since the January 2012 KNU-Government ceasefire. The commentary urges all armed groups to focus on justice for civilians in southeast Myanmar who have suffered atrocities for decades. Since the ceasefire, KHRG has documented multiple cases in which armed actors have killed civilians in southeast Myanmar.

We urge the Myanmar government to conduct a thorough and independent investigation of this, and all similar allegations, and bring the perpetrators to justice. Soldiers found to have committed abuses should be prosecuted in a transparent fashion and to the fullest extent possible in accordance with domestic and international laws. We reiterate the recommendations from “Replacing Impunity with Accountability”. All armed actors must:

- ◆ Hold their soldiers accountable for human rights abuses they commit.
- ◆ Be transparent in their investigation and prosecution of such abuses.
- ◆ Effectively punish the perpetrators of such abuses in accordance with the law.

“This killing of a journalist and human rights defender by government forces will have a chilling effect on the ability of civil society actors to report on human rights violations. The Thein Sein government has repeatedly emphasized its commitment to freedom of expression, transparency, and the rule of law. If the government is serious about this, it must immediately establish a credible, independent and impartial investigation, to ensure that the perpetrators are held to account, and take action to ensure that other human rights defenders and journalists can operate without fear for their safety.” Said Saw Way Lay, KHRG’s Advocacy Coordinator.

KHRG is an independent, unaffiliated, locally-led organization committed to promoting the perspective of villagers whose voices are often ignored. Founded in 1992, KHRG engages in field research, documentation, report-writing and local and international advocacy. KHRG also conducts workshops where villagers can openly discuss the human rights abuses and other challenges they face, gain greater knowledge of protection strategies, and consider options for collective action in their local area.

Over the years, KHRG researchers have documented widespread forced labor, the systematic destruction of villages and crops, forced relocation, arbitrary detention, torture, extortion, summary executions and sexual assault committed by a range of armed actors in Southeast Myanmar.

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