



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

26th June 2020

Today marks International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and as such KHRG would like to commemorate those who have suffered as a result of torture worldwide. Torture encompasses inflicting pain or suffering either physical or mental on a person for the purpose of obtaining information or for sheer cruelty. It is an attack on a person's dignity and despite the prohibition on torture being widely ratified in several treaties it is still prevalent worldwide. KHRG hopes these people have found comfort and that in the future others will not be subjected to such treatment.

Myanmar has a long history of the use of torture during conflict with it being systematically used by armed actors. In the past the Tatmadaw endorsed the "four cuts campaign" which consisted of the targeting of civilians deemed to be supporting ethnic armed groups but in reality, all Karen civilians were targeted. As a result, civilians were subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment.

While the rate at which torture committed against Karen civilians by the Tatmadaw has decreased, it is still continuing by armed actors in cases when the villagers are arrested. This indicates that due to the long history of its use during conflict, torture is viewed by many powerful armed actors as a legitimate tool for both interrogation and punishment to the current day.

Although, the Ceasefire Agreement has led to a decrease in torture being perpetrated in Karen State it is still widely used in other areas of Myanmar. The lack of accountability and justice for the long-standing use of torture has led to the Tatmadaw to continue to operate with impunity. As a result, they continue to target civilians from ethnic groups. Recently the Rohingya have been the targets of indiscriminate attacks including torture and inhumane treatment. KHRG stands with all ethnic groups in Myanmar as we continue to fight against torture in the country.

KHRG calls for justice for the victims who have suffered at the hands of others. Without this justice, these crimes will continue to be committed and peace will not be achievable. We must work towards helping those who have suffered in the past and stop others suffering in the future.