



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

**Statement on International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
2020**

“The impact of armed conflict on children is everyone's responsibility. And it must be everyone's concern.”

Graça Machel-Mandela, Expert of the Secretary-General

Today marks International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression, the objective of this day is to bring global attention to the devastating effects conflict has on children worldwide. The sad truth is children are some of the most vulnerable when conflict breaks out as they become powerless to the abuses being committed against them. They depend on those around them to protect and assert their rights which often do not occur during times of conflict, leaving children to be forgotten.

When conflict breaks out children are forced out of school, their education is forgotten. They struggle to access basic amenities such as shelter, water and food. They get caught up in the conflict, they have to flee their homes, they lose their family members, and they are forced to join armed forces. Children witness and are subjected to terrible atrocities, becoming victims of rape, torture, physical attacks and so much more. The mental and physical suffering enduring by children during conflict is unimaginable.

Myanmar is no exception¹, in 2019, an estimated 460,000 children affected by conflict or natural disasters required humanitarian assistance with approximately 55 per cent of children living under income poverty. According to a report issued by the Secretary-General, there was 114 cases of child recruitment, 55 incidents of killing and maiming child, 5 attacks on school and 9 children were abducted in 2019.²

Regardless of what is claimed, Myanmar is still in conflict and every party involved in the conflict must ensure the protection of children. KHRG urges for greater protection of children across South-east Myanmar. We need to work together to ensure that children do not suffer and that they are given the opportunity to live happy and healthy lives. More must be done to protect children, to promote international humanitarian and human rights law, and to ensure accountability for violations of the rights of children.

¹ For more information read KHRG (2008) [Growing up under militarisation: Abuse and agency of children in Karen State](#)

² General Assembly, (2019) [Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General](#) A/73/907–S/2019/509