



Karen Human Rights Group

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

KHRG's statement on World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development is an occasion to promote culture and highlight the significance of its diversity as an agent of inclusion and positive change. It represents an opportunity to celebrate diverse cultures and to reflect on how to contribute to a dialogue that promotes mutual understanding among different cultures.

Our Karen culture is unique and diverse in itself. The Karen people are ethnically and linguistically diverse. Within the Karen there are different sub-groups with different languages, customs, and religions. These sub-groups have their own unique and varying cultural traits which makes the culture as a whole strong and beautiful. Despite years of oppression,¹ we stand strong, continuing to proudly represent our culture. KHRG advocates on behalf of the Karen in the hope of projecting the voices of our community. We strongly believe that communities around the world should be given the opportunity to promote and celebrate their culture.

Myanmar is culturally diverse with over a hundred different ethnic groups. Despite this, people from minority groups are still unable to express their culture and beliefs freely. If Myanmar wants to build a system of peace and development for all, every ethnic group must be recognised, with all their diverse beliefs, cultures, and practices. KHRG endorses the recognition of all ethnic groups in Myanmar. We need to embrace the rich cultural diversity within our country.

KHRG urges governments, individuals, and everything in between to strive for a society more inclusive and tolerant of diversity. Cultural intolerance contributes to major conflicts worldwide. We need to bridge the gap between different cultures to promote peace, stability, and development. KHRG urges us all to foster a society that affords everyone the freedom to express their culture.

¹ For more information on discrimination faced by Karen people, See Karen Human Rights Group (2017) [Foundation of Fear: 25 years of villagers' voices from southeast Myanmar](#)