



KARENNI HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP

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Quarterly Briefer

The Karenni Human Rights Group first quarterly briefer will breakdown the human rights abuses committed by the Burmese military in Karenni state as well as the increasing the number of IDPs from January to March 2022.



Quarterly Highlights:

- ◇ The [Karenni State Consultative Council](#) released a special letter regarding food rations on February 28, 2022.
- ◇ KnHRG Director Banya said the military junta is committing [genocide](#) by preventing access to food rations and destroying homes.
- ◇ The Karenni Human Rights Group and the Network for Human Rights Documentation—Burma released “[The World Must Know](#)” report on February 9, 2022.
- ◇ Fortify Rights released a report about the [ongoing](#) crimes in Karenni state on February 15, 2022.



Top Photo: Structure hit by shelling
Bottom Photo: IDP camp in the jungle
Photos: KnHRG



Body of Karenni found in a makeshift grave.
Photo: KnHRG

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ANALYSIS

Intro

In three short months, the situation on the ground in Karenni state continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. The Burmese military is intensifying its attack under the pretense of eliminating any and all opposition, such as the local ethnic armed organizations (EAO) and the Karenni Defense Force, or associates with ties to the exiled civilian government, the National Unity Government. However, unarmed civilians have become one of the top targets of the Burmese military. About 200,000 civilians are displaced, which is more than 1/3 of the state's estimated 300,000 population. About 200 Karenni have been killed by the Burmese military since the start of the coup. As junta forces continue to attack villages and cities, their campaign has expanded to include internally displaced person (IDP) camps. Assaults on IDP camps force constant movement of IDPs in the state, as well as a significant number of displaced to flee to neighboring states and regions. Due to the junta's blocking of humanitarian aid, IDPs in Karenni state are forced to face starvation and, ultimately, death as access to food, clean water, medicines, and other necessary supplies continue to dwindle. This is not a problem that will solve itself with the current non-interference policy most countries are adopting. The Burmese junta is systematically killing the Karenni people in order to maintain control of an already precarious situation.

For this quarterly briefer report, the Karenni Human Rights Group (KnHRG) painstakingly collected the raw data found in Tables 1.1 through 3.4 to present accurate information that is typically distorted by the Burmese junta in order to hide their criminal activity.

Human Rights Violations

In order to take and maintain control of the country, the Burmese military is intensifying their attacks on civilians, including the Karenni people. It has become clear that the Burmese junta aims to remove opposition in Karenni state by any means necessary with complete and utter disregard to the safety and security of the Karenni. Over the last three months, 52 Karenni were killed. As indicated in the data, many Karenni were killed due to mortar shells and airstrikes, but the majority were arbitrarily arrested and detained before they were ultimately killed by the Burmese military.

Arrested, Detained, & Missing: There are a total of 42 Karenni that are documented as arrested, detained, and/or missing after detention. In January alone, there were 21 Karenni detained and/or missing. According to reports, there were eight Karenni taken from Loikaw and three taken from Six Mile village. Junta forces also targeted traveling Karenni. As civilians flee from their homes, there is a noticeable migration of Karenni IDPs to southern Shan state. At least eight Karenni civilians were reported to be taken as they traveled from Loikaw



Karenni home destroyed by mortar shells launched by the Burmese military.

Photo: KnHRG

and/or missing. At least 10 were taken from Warree Su Palain Village. Again, the junta forces targeted traveling Karenni. Four were taken while traveling to Hoe Pon village, southern Shan state and two were reportedly taken after returning home to Zee Phye Gone after staying in an IDP camp (Table 2.1). During the month of March, the number of detained and/or missing decreased tremendously with only five Karenni reportedly taken by junta forces (Table 3.1).

Arrested, Tortured, & Killed: While the previous section discussed the number of Karenni that were arrested, detained, and/or missing, this section will look at confirmed number of Karenni that were arrested, tortured, and killed by junta forces.



Crater caused from mortar shell launched by the Burmese military.

Photo: KnHRG

Almost half of the 52 Karenni killed during the 3-month period were first arbitrarily arrested and detained by Burmese troops. Upon discovery of the bodies, evidence of torture was clearly visible. The junta denied use of any kind of torture during the victims' detention. At least 1/3 of the 30 total number of deaths in January were arrested, tortured, and killed (Table 1.2). In February, four Karenni were reported to be arrested and detained by junta forces in Six Mile village, Deemaw Soe township and Warree Su Palain village in Phe Khone township (Table 2.2). These four Karenni were subsequently killed. In March, nine Karenni were arrested and detained in Six Mile village and Sin Taung village in Deemaw Soe Township and Nan Pae village in Bawlake township. Just like the four cases in February, the nine Karenni were killed by junta forces during their detainment (Table 3.2).

Mortar Shells and Airstrikes: Since the beginning of the year, junta forces have been firing [hundreds](#) of shells every day. Shelling has reached at least 5km outside of conflict zones forcing thousands to flee from their homes in neighboring areas. Over a three-month period, about 1/4 of those who died were killed by mortar shells. At least eight were killed by mortar shells launched during armed conflict in Loikaw during January (Table 1.2). Another 10 were reportedly injured. In March, three children, one woman, and one elderly woman were killed by mortar shells in Lah Htun village in Loikaw Township and Daw Taw Kue village in Deemaw Soe Township. The usage of mortar shells also prevents local civilians from accessing emergency healthcare. Four elderly women died of heart attacks when shelling was launched near their homes (Table 3.2).

As junta forces continue their assault on the Karenni people, the military is also including [airstrikes](#) in its arsenal. The junta suffered huge losses with its ground troops due to the armed conflict with local anti-junta opposition. To offset these losses, the junta is supplementing their attacks with airstrikes to effectively eliminate the PDF and local EAOs; however, the Karenni people are also suffering from the onslaught of airstrikes. From January to March, more than 1/8 of Karenni killed were killed by airstrikes. In January, five Karenni were killed, including two young females (Table 1.2).

In February, Karenni civilians were targeted by airstrikes three times. From these airstrikes, two Karenni were killed in Sele Done village in Deemaw Soe Township (Table 2.2). The number of airstrikes increased in March to five reported airstrikes targeting civilian areas. Fortunately, there were no recorded deaths linked to these attacks.

Outliers (Shot/Killed, Killed/Burned, Unidentifiable): While the majority of Karenni were killed while detained or from mortar shells and airstrikes launched by junta forces, there were Karenni killed that fell outside the common documentation. In January, three bodies of Karenni were discovered; however, the cause of death is unidentifiable (Table 1.2). Even though the cause of death cannot be confirmed, it is believed that the Burmese military is responsible for the deaths of the three Karenni. In February, there were two confirmed kills by the junta forces in Daw Mukla village in Loikaw township. Using a favorite tactic in efforts to remove evidence, the Burmese troops then burned the bodies of the two Karenni (Table 2.2). The last unique death was the killing of a young female in Mine Long Ward in Loikaw City. She was shot and killed by Burmese troops in March (Table 3.2).

Destruction of Property

Since the beginning of the year, the Burmese military has been systematically destroying entire villages and homes in order to drive the Karenni people out. In three months, KnHRG documented a total of 348 structures that were burned or sustained damage, of which more than half were burned to the ground. In January, a total of 85 structures were burned or sustained damage in Karenni state. More than half of the documented structures in January were burned to the ground. Two religious buildings were included in the total number for January. Both religious buildings were shelled by the Burmese military, but only one was documented as burned to the ground (Table 1.4).

In February, there were a total of 80 structures that were reported as burned or sustained damage. A significant amount, an estimated 75%, of structures were intentionally burned to the ground by junta forces in Warree Su Palain village, Wee Thel Ku village, and Six Mile village in Deemaw Soe Township. Two religious buildings were reportedly damaged by shells launched by the Burmese troops (Table 2.4). There was a significant increase of structures that were burned or damaged by junta forces in March. A total of 183 structures were documented by KnHRG as burned or sustained damage. While almost half of the total structures were intentionally burned down by Burmese troops, they targeted several locations: Ce Lie Done village, Pue Par village, Tay Hsoe Leh village, Twe Due Bilar village, Hsaung Dular Ywe Tit village, Sin Taung village, and Five Mile village in Deemaw Soe Township as well as Nan Pae village in Bawlake Township. Four religious buildings were damaged by mortar shells and airstrikes, as well as one health clinic damaged by mortar shells launched by the Burmese military (Table 3.4).



Karenni home hit by mortar shells.

Photo: KnHRG

IDP camps

As the Karenni people are forced to flee from their homes due to the Burmese junta's brutality, several IDP camps have been established to shelter the growing number of IDPs in the state. Unfortunately, due to the Burmese junta's humanitarian blockade, IDPs are facing death by starvation, dehydration, and disease. This is not a new issue faced by IDP camps in Karenni state, but rather a common problem in IDP camps throughout Burma. Civil society organizations and community based organizations, including Karenni Human Rights Group, repeatedly ask for aid and support from the international community, only for humanitarian aid and assistance to slowly dry up.



Displaced Karennis in IDP camp.

Photo: KnHRG

In January, the [Karenni State Consultative Council](#), recognizing the growing number of IDPs in Karenni state, released a statement acknowledging the conditions IDPs may face in IDP camps, which will only be further exacerbated by the scarcity of humanitarian aid. In efforts to mitigate the imminent food and supply shortage that IDP camps will face, the Karenni Advisory Council detailed recommendations for current and future IDPs to ensure a level of food security, even if it is for a limited amount of time.

1. Make a list of different kinds of food and systematically collect and store rice, corn and different kinds of beans.
2. Collect and pack rice, cooking oil and salt, as well as basic medicine, for family members for three days.
3. Share food and help each other to overcome the initial food shortage.
4. If you are facing a shortage of food, please immediately inform to relevant village committee and IDP camp committees.
5. Prioritize the elderly sick, children under 16, pregnant women and breast-feeding women.
6. Stop breeding animals and making snack productions which use a lot of rice or paddy.

Despite the efforts to recognize and mitigate the shortage problems, as well as notify the Karenni people of the necessary actions to temporarily help alleviate said problems, the number of IDPs continues to rise. Unfortunately, IDP camps are not safe from the wrath of the Burmese junta. With advanced technology from foreign countries and the increased usage of airstrikes, the Burmese military is targeting IDP camps forcing the constant movement of IDPs within the state as well as the exodus to neighboring Shan state and the Mandalay and Yangon regions. In January, there were an estimated 170,000 IDPs in Karenni state. An additional 45,000 Karenni fled to southern Shan state and an undetermined number of Karenni also fled to Mandalay and Yangon (Table 1.3). In February, there was an additional 15,000 new Karenni IDPs in the state as well as an exodus of 25,000 Karenni IDPs into southern Shan state, Mandalay and Yangon (Table 2.3). In addition to 25,000 new Karenni IDPs in March, an estimated 25,000 Karenni IDPs fled to southern Shan state, Mandalay, and Yangon. There is currently an estimated number of 210,000 Karenni displaced because of the Burmese military's incessant attacks on the people (Table 3.3).

Conclusions

As demonstrated here in the analysis, the Burmese junta and its forces are driving the Karenni people from their homes. Even though the rate of death decreased during the three-month period, the Burmese military ramped up its attacks in Karenni state that can be seen in the data related to the destruction of property and the documentation of IDPs. While there was reportedly no armed conflict between the Burmese military and the local anti-junta opposition in the last week of March, junta forces are taking the opportunity to [reinforce](#) their ground troops for a full-on assault on Demoso. Reports indicate tanks arrived on March 26, followed by a military column consisting of 40 armored vehicles arriving on March 27 and 28.

The Burmese military must be held accountable for its war crimes, crimes against humanity, and human rights violations. If there is no intervention from the international community, the Burmese military will continue to commit human rights violations with impunity in Karenni state. If the attacks continue at its current rate, Karenni state will be lost to the Burmese military. As of right now, IDP camps are facing looming food and supply shortages. They fear further attacks from the Burmese military. The Karenni people cannot wait much longer for aid and assistance from the international community.

The international community must implement targeted sanctions and enforce a coordinated global arms embargo to prevent further death and destruction in Karenni state and hold the Burmese junta accountable for its crimes. In order to assist and support Karenni IDPs, the international community must coordinate comprehensive emergency humanitarian aid provisions as well as formally designate safe zones. It is essential to provide assistance quickly and efficiently to the impacted community. These asks, which can found in further detail in the following recommendations, are necessary in the prevention of more heinous crimes against humanity, but also the preservation of the Karenni people.

The Tables, which can be found at the end of the briefer report, break down the raw data into individual months to give the reader a clear picture of the death, detention, displacement, and destruction caused by the Burmese military.

Medical clinic damaged by mortar shells launched by the Burmese military.

Photo: KnHRG



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Direct coordinate emergency humanitarian aid provision efforts, including through cross-border channels, for the aid to reach the vulnerable population of more than 200,000 Karenni IDPs resulted from the military violence and airstrikes, and combat COVID-19, by providing resources and working in equal and meaningful partnership and collaboration with ethnic and community-based humanitarian and civil society organizations;
2. Impose further targeted sanctions against the military and its leadership, military businesses including specifically targeting Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprises (MOGE), military-linked business partners and network of arms dealers;
3. Impose a coordinated global arms embargo on the Burmese military;
4. Sanction the supply of jet fuel to the Burmese military to end airstrikes and impose no fly zone;
5. Recommend the International Criminal Court to accept the declaration lodged by the National Unity Government of Burma, under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute accepting the Court's jurisdiction with respect to international crimes committed in Burma territory since 1 July 2002;



Unexploded shell uncovered in March.

Photo: KnHRG

NYA MEH'S ESCAPE FROM THE BURMESE MILITARY

Nya Meh* is one of thousands forced to flee on foot to escape the Burmese military encroaching on her village. Carrying a large jug of water in one hand and limited supplies on her back, Nya Meh's trek away from her village has been long and arduous. As she shares her experiences, a young child stands close to her side.

Her village believed that the armed conflict between the Burmese military and the Karenni Defense Force was very far from the village. However, this changed as gunfire and artillery explosions could be heard closer and closer with each passing day. It came to the point that many, especially families with small children, were told to leave behind their homes for the safety of the jungles.

Just as the villagers were leaving, Nya Meh heard a huge explosion on the hill by a big tree near her village, which was immediately followed with the sound of gunfire in the village. Nya Meh said that everyone was running up and down to get away from the village. Now, they are all traveling to the jungle to take refuge from the Burmese military.



Karenni IDPs collecting water from the riverside.

Photo: KnHRG

However, even traveling to the jungle is fraught with problems. Karenni that were able to escape conflict zones before major fighting occurred were transported by vehicles; however, access to various roadways are now limited to road ranges that are more difficult to travel with vehicles due to the increased fighting. Those traveling by vehicles are forced to push vehicles on muddied roads.

Those traveling on foot, like Nya Meh, are worried about being attacked by the Burmese military because there are many children and elderly people within the group. It is not safe to live in their homes. It is not safe to travel on the roads. It is not safe to stay in the IDP camps. It is simply not safe to be a civilian in Karenni state, or anywhere else in Burma.

In addition to fearing for safety and the risk of violent attacks by the Burmese military, IDPs must worry about the shortage of supplies that IDP camps face as humanitarian aid and assistance is blocked by the Burmese junta. As food security is threatened and access to necessary supplies, such as medicines, are limited, IDPs are faced with the possibilities of starvation, disease, and, unfortunately, death. The call for international intervention from the people of Burma is deafening, yet remains unanswered. Until the international community enacts targeted sanctions, implements a coordinated global arms embargo, coordinates emergency humanitarian and cross border aid, and designates safe zones for IDPs, the Burmese junta will continue to commit crimes against humanity, war crimes, and human rights violations with impunity.

**Name changed to protect identity*

January 2022



Airstrike in Reekee Bu, January 2022

Photos: KnHRG

Table 1.1: Number of Karenni detained or missing in January

Taken from Loikaw	8
Taken from Six Mile Village	3
Traveling from Loikaw to Naung	8
Verified missing	2
Total number	21

Table 1.2: Number of Karenni deaths and cause of deaths in January

Karenni arrested, tortured, and killed	10
Mortar shells	8
Airstrikes	5
Heart attacks due to mortar shells	4
Unidentifiable	3
Total number of deaths	30

Table 1.3: Number of Karenni IDPs in January

Karenni IDPs fled to southern Shan State, or Mandalay and Yangon regions	45,000
Total number of Karenni IDPs	170,000

Table 1.4: Number of structures damaged or destroyed by the Burmese military in January

Religious structures damaged	1
Religious structures burned to the ground	1
Structures burned to the ground	54
Total structures damaged and destroyed	85

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Table 2.1: Number of Karenni detained or missing in February

Taken from Waree Su Palain Village	10
Taken from Zee Phye Gone after	2
Traveling in Hoe Pon village,	4
Total number	16

Table 2.2: Number of Karenni deaths and cause of deaths in February

Karenni arrested, tortured, and killed	4
Airstrikes	2
Killed and bodies burned	2
Total number of deaths	8

Table 2.3: Number of Karenni IDPs in February

Newly displaced Karenni	15,000
Karenni IDPs fled to southern Shan State, Mandalay, or Yangon	25,000
Total number of Karenni IDPs	185,000

Table 2.4: Number of structures damaged or destroyed by the Burmese military in February

Religious structures damaged	2
Religious structures burned to the ground	1
Structures burned to the ground	60
Total structures damaged and destroyed	80

Karenni discovered after killed and burned by the Burmese military.

Photo: KnHRG



March 2022

Table 3.1: Number of Karenni detained or missing in March

Confirmed, but location taken undetermined	5
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Table 3.2: Number of Karenni deaths and cause of deaths in March

Karenni arrested, tortured, and killed	9
Mortar shells	5
Shot and killed	1
Total number of deaths	15

Table 3.3: Number of Karenni IDPs in March

Newly displaced Karenni	25,000
Karenni IDPs fled to southern Shan State, Mandalay, or Yangon	25,000
Total number of Karenni IDPs	210,000



Top Photo: Church hit by mortar shells

Bottom Left: Damage inside the church.

Bottom Right: Karenni IDP receiving medical care in IDP camp.

Photos: KnHRG

Table 3.4: Number of structures damaged or destroyed by the Burmese military in March

Religious structures damaged	4
Health clinic damaged	1
Structures burned to the ground	83
Structures damaged and destroyed	183