



For immediate release

02/04/2021

Salween Peace Park Under Attack!

Burmese military violence undermines Indigenous Karen conservation for peace

On March 27th, 2021, the Burmese military dictatorship began launching deadly airstrikes on Day Bu Noh and surrounding villages, in the heart of the Salween Peace Park in northern Karen State's Mutraw (Hpapun) District, as well as in other Karen areas outside of the peace park in Kler Lwee Htoo (Nyaunglebin) District. As of April 1st, the Burmese military has carried out several aerial bomb attacks, killing at least 19 people and injuring at least 27 more. Homes and schools have been destroyed, and buildings damaged.

These attacks have already forced around 3,000 Karen refugees to attempt to flee across the border into Thailand and they are gathered in a number of places from the northernmost border point to the southernmost border point, while at least 20,000 villagers remain internally displaced, hiding for their lives in the mountain forests.

More than anything, the people of Mutraw long to live on their own ancestral lands in peaceful co-existence with other ethnic peoples and communities in Burma. The Salween Peace Park offers an alternative to top-down extractivist militarised development, and offers a model of community-based governance that conserves the rich biodiversity of this region. It offers a way to build true peace, reconciliation, and a shared future.

However, the Burmese military has never shown an interest or commitment to building peace or demilitarizing Karen lands. Since 2010 and especially since 2018, throughout Burma's so-called transition to democracy, the military intensified efforts to expand military infrastructure throughout Karen territories. They have fortified their military bases and roads while expanding into areas controlled by the KNU/KNLA, in explicit violation of the NCA. Shelling by the Burma Army has been happening almost daily in areas of northern Karen State, since December 2020.

The Burmese military junta are committing heinous acts of violence against civilians across Burma. Their attacks in northern Karen state threaten the lives of the Indigenous people who live there. These attacks also violate the Salween Peace Park's core principles of peace and self-determination, ecological integrity, and cultural survival.

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