



Karen Peace Support Network

Statement on World Refugee Day by the Karen Peace Support Network

Date: 20th June 2025

Refugees in camps along the Thai-Burma border facing survival crisis.

Over 108,000 refugees in nine camps along the Thai-Burma border are facing a survival crisis after drastic donor funding cuts to food support and health services.

In April 2025, standard food rations per adult were cut to only 77 baht (2.33 USD) per month. Although this amount was raised to 176 baht (5.33 USD) in June, there is no guarantee of any support after July.

Donors have gradually reduced their support for refugees over the past years. By late 2024, the standard food ration per adult had already been cut to just 324 baht (approximately 9.8 USD).

However, the most recent reductions are unprecedented, leaving refugees struggling simply to survive. At the same time, funding cuts to camp health services have further increased the financial burden on refugees.

A key challenge is that refugees are not allowed out of the camps to work and earn an income. Even though labour jobs are available in surrounding Thai areas, refugees are forbidden from taking them and are liable to arrest and punishment if caught outside the camps.

The refugees are thus in an unsustainable situation. Although the KNU has regained control of large stretches of territory opposite Thailand, ongoing fighting and the SAC's intensified air and artillery attacks on civilian areas mean it is still not safe for the refugees in camps to return home.

We affirm that refugees are human beings with the potential to stand on their own and can become an important part of Thailand's workforce.

We therefore call on the Thai government to allow and establish a system for refugees to be able to work legally outside refugee camps.

We also call on international donors to maintain their support for food, health services, and education in the initial phase, by assessing the needs and appropriateness of reducing assistance in consultation with the Thai government and refugee committees. This is to ensure that the transition

from aid dependency to self-reliance can truly take place.

In addition, we propose that the Thai government open opportunities for refugees to access Thai language education and non-formal education, so that children and youth can become quality human resources and a capable workforce for Thai society in the future.

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