

## **Third Karen Women's Seminar Statement**

**March 29, 2018**

In order to strengthen the Karen women's movement across Karen communities, the Karen Women's Organization organized the third Karen Women's Seminar in Lay Wah (Law Khee Lar), Karen State, on 28-29 March 2018. There were a total of 125 women who attended the seminar, representing many Karen civil society organizations from various parts of Karen state, including human rights groups, teachers, land rights activists, teachers and students group, women village chiefs and other local communities.

The aim of holding the two-day seminar was to strengthen networking among Karen grassroots women for the betterment of our community. The participants discussed and analyzed the current political situation and peace process, challenges women and children face regarding protection and justice issues, protection of our lands and natural resources and also updates on the current conditions of refugees and IDPs.

In this seminar, we established a "Karen Grassroots Women's Network" to strengthen our advocacy work and raise the voice of women for our community. In this meeting we also came out with our common positions and main messages for future advocacy so that we have the same voices. We also chose 25 women to represent women voices in the future peace process. In order to strengthen women's participation and involvement in all sectors we also believe that we need to empower and build up the capacity of more young women so that they are ready to lead the next generation of women.

At the conclusion of this Karen women's seminar, the attendees jointly endorsed the following resolutions;

1. We call on the Burma Army to stop their military operations in all ethnic areas.
2. We want the 2008 constitution to be abolished and call on the Burma Government to begin a process whereby a genuine federal constitution can be drawn up.
3. We also call on all stakeholders to stop mega development projects in all ethnic areas until there is genuine peace and a political settlement.
4. There must be no forced repatriation of refugees.
5. We also call on the international community and donors to continue to support humanitarian aid to refugees and IDPs according to international standards until peace is restored in the country.

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