



KACHIN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION THAILAN
P.O.BOX 415, CHIANG MAI 50000, THAILAND

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Release statement: The Voices of Those Suffered by War

The release of 'The Voices of Those Suffered by War' provides a unique insight into the life experiences of women who have witnessed the profound impact of conflict in Kachin state, Myanmar. KWAT has gathered the stories of 20 of the countless women survivors from different generations, backgrounds and areas of Kachin state, who through these stories, share an intimate and emotion-filled exploration of women in warzones. The voices of women in conflict are often overlooked, and these stories reveal the challenges that women must face when their families and communities are attacked, displaced and devastated by arrests, murders, disappearances and landmines.

"Because of the war, my happiness in life and everything were destroyed. I used to cry and feel depressed, thinking about how could I rebuild my life. I don't want fighting to continue. I don't want others to be or suffer like me. I wish to have genuine peace. I want to have a chance to talk freely without fear. I need someone who seriously listens to our feelings." (identity)

The stories of the women survivors show how they have been forced to adapt to the most extreme of circumstances, taking on the role of sole breadwinner when their male family members have been injured or killed in the conflict, suffering intimate violence as well as military violence, and working tirelessly to support their children and parents to survive. The stories of the women survivors show resilience, but also heartbreak, isolation and hopelessness, in a situation where livelihood opportunities, education and basic services are hard to come by. Decades of conflict have left physical and emotional scars on the women of Kachin state, and the survivors are united in their overwhelming desire for justice and peace.

'The Voices of Those Suffered by War' ultimately highlights need for support for the women of Kachin state, as they battle unfathomable difficulties in trying to live their lives and provide some semblance of security for their loved ones. The impact on their mental health and emotional wellbeing is clearly articulated. However, in the face of human rights violations, airstrikes and torture, the women have found solidarity with each other in women's survivor groups, such as Kasi Kaja.

"This report reflects the challenges that Kachin women have had to face in the past and in the wake of the coup, but also demonstrates the challenges that will come in the future. KWAT recognizes the need to support survivors of conflict related gender-based violence in Myanmar, and will stand in solidarity with them until justice is served."

Kachin Women's Association
Thailand (KWAT)
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