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Calling the United Nations Security Council to Act to Stop the Current Attacks on Civilians in Karen State 8 May 2006

The Women's League of Burma is appalled and sickened by the current Burmese military regime's offensive against civilians in Karen State. This deliberate and direct targeting of civilians in armed conflict by the military regime clearly violates international humanitarian law and demonstrates that conflict in Burma is not appeasing.

The WLB supports its member organization, the Karen Women's Organization's call for urgent action by the United Nations Security Council to stop this reprehensible violence.

The Burmese military regime's forced relocation campaign on-going in northern and western Karen State since November 2005 is the largest military offensive since 1997. To date, around 13 000 Karen have been forcibly displaced in Nyaunglebin, Toungoo and Muthraw districts as military regime soldiers attempt to forcibly relocate people to military controlled zones. Extrajudicial killings, forced portering, destructions of homes, fields, and food stocks are also reported.

New landmines laid by the regime soldiers along the border are preventing displaced people from seeking or receiving humanitarian assistance. This begins a new round of death and displacement for Karen civilians, with particular burdens on women and children.

Recent decisions at the UN World Summit and by the UNSC now affirm a collective responsibility of all UN members to protect civilian populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity in the absence of government protection.

The WLB strongly urges the United Nations Security Council to take urgent and appropriate action regarding the human rights crisis underway in eastern Burma. It urges the UNSC to take action in accordance with its 28 April 2006 resolution 1674, "On protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict" and its 31 October 2000 resolution 1325, "On Women, Peace and Security."

The current attack on civilians in Karen State is precisely an occurrence for which these two UNSC resolutions were adopted and should trigger immediate UNSC action and place Burma on the UNSC agenda. The WLB also urges the international women's community to act in solidarity and pressure the UNSC to take relevant action.

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