



## **Karen Women Organization**

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### **Karen Women's Organization (KWO) Message for International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**

On this day, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, KWO is launching a 16-Day Campaign calling for the elimination of violence against women. The awareness raising campaign will take place in the 7 Karen refugee camps and 5 districts inside Karen State. Participants will gain knowledge on how to prevent and stop violence against women, compete in speeches and debates, and participate in community activities aimed at advocating for the protection of women.

Violence and a lack of access to justice continue to be serious problems facing Karen women and women everywhere. Violence against women makes all of us weak and is something we all need to work together to stop. We must teach our children how to treat women with respect in order to stop the cycle of violence that women face everyday.

*“If you see someone committing violence against women, you must stop them. Not stopping violence makes everyone guilty. Victims of violence can seek help from KWO. If victims live in a refugee camp, they can access one of KWO’s safe houses where they will have a safe place to stay and be provided with some material needs and counseling. Victims inside Karen state can get assistance from the KWO leader in their district or township.”*

– **Naw K’nyaw Paw, KWO Secretary**

Women in refugee camps and inside Karen State do not have access to fair justice. Although there are justice mechanisms and systems in place in refugee camps and in some areas in Karen State, that can respond to women who are victims of violence, the mechanisms are inadequate, inconsistent, and unenforced. We saw again the inadequacy of the justice system available to women in refugee camps, in September 2013, when a refugee woman was found dead just outside Mae La camp. The system failed to provide justice to the victim and her family.

KWO is calling on the entire community, including International organizations, donors, and the Thailand and Myanmar governments to work together towards ending violence against women and improving access to justice for women in the refugee community and inside Karen State.

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