Karen National Union
Headquarters
Kawthoolei
www.knuhq.org

Public Statement by the Karen National Union
On the Prohibition of Sexual Violence and Elimination of Gender Discrimination

Date: September 1st, 2025

To our fellow People of Kawthoolei,

The Karen National Union (KNU) is proud to share with the Karen people and fellow people of Kawthoolei that on 21 July 2013, we formally signed the Deed of Commitment with Geneva Call, pledging to uphold the absolute prohibition of sexual violence and to work tirelessly toward the elimination of gender discrimination in all areas under our authority.

This action reflects our deeply held belief in the dignity and rights of every human being. We are concerned about the devastating and lifelong impact that sexual violence has on individuals, families, and communities especially in the midst of armed conflict. As leaders of a people who have endured great hardship, we feel a profound responsibility to ensure that no one under our care experiences such suffering.

By signing this Deed, we have committed ourselves to:

- Prevent and respond to all forms of sexual violence, wherever we operate;
- Protect detainees and civilians from sexual harm;
- Support survivors of sexual violence with access to medical, psychological, legal, and social assistance;
- Promote equality by eliminating all gender-based discrimination in our laws, policies, and practices;
- Ensure the participation of women in decision-making at all levels;
- Hold accountable those who violate these principles, through clear orders, strong enforcement, and meaningful punishment;
- Cooperate with monitoring bodies to promote transparency and responsibility.

This commitment is not symbolic—it is a binding promise rooted in our values and our struggle for justice. We take these responsibilities seriously and will implement them through training, oversight, and unwavering accountability across all our political and military structures.

We share this message today to inform, reassure, and engage the Karen people in shaping a society where women and men live as equals, and where no person is harmed or silenced by violence. Let this be a step toward healing, toward justice, and toward a future we can all be proud of.

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