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BURMA | Renewed Fighting in Kachin State

The Kachin community worldwide has appealed to the United Nations Security Council to refer the government of Burma to the International Criminal Court amid reports that new Burma Army offensives have resulted in the displacement of thousands of civilians in Kachin and Karen states since early April.

Renewed fighting between the Burma Army and Kachin Independence Army has led to the displacement of 4,000 civilians since early April, according to the UN. In March, a fresh offensive by the Burma Army launched in Karen State, displaced more than 2,400 people from their homes, according to a new report by the Karen Peace Support Network.

CSW's East Asia Team Leader Benedict Rogers said, "The displacement of thousands of civilians in Kachin and Karen states, and continuing grave human rights violations in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states, represent a dramatic deterioration in the situation in Burma and a very serious setback to hopes for peace in the country. The culture of impunity in which the Burma Army operates must end, and the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity must be held accountable. We support the calls by the worldwide Kachin community for humanitarian access, mediation, justice and accountability and we urge the United Nations Security Council to act without delay."

In their statement on April 23, the Kachin Community warned of an escalation in Burma Army military offensives against the country's ethnic groups, "The Burma military is escalating attacks against ethnic groups in the country, including in Rakhine state, Kachin state, Shan state and most recently breaking the ceasefire in Karen state. ... There is no shortage of evidence of violations of international law committed by the Burma military. The United Nations has been documenting these crimes for decades. A detailed assessment in 2016 stated that what may amount to war crimes were being committed in Kachin State and Shan State. The United Nations has also stated that human rights violations in northern Rakhine State may constitute crimes against humanity and even amount to elements of genocide."

Among other requests, the Kachin community asked that other countries act as mediators and negotiate a solution to the civil conflict in Kachin state and for the UN Security Council to support a resolution referring Burma to the International Criminal Court. On April 26, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Christine Schraner Burgener of Switzerland, an experienced diplomat, as his new Special Envoy on Myanmar.