

## **KWO Statement concerning the forcing of women and children back into the landmine zones of Karen State.**

**February 5th, 2010**

KWO is again very concerned about the forced repatriation done by the Thai authority in Nong Bua refugee camp. 3 families with a total of 13 people, 9 of them are women and the rest are children, including 9 month old breastfeeding baby were forced to go back to Burma today.

KWO is very worried for the wellbeing of this group who were sent back today as all of them are women and children. We are saddened and disappointed by the Thai authority for their lack of empathy.

Blooming Night Zan, the joint secretary 1 of KWO said "I cannot imagine how frightened the women and children are. KWO is concerned because the weather is still too cold, we don't know how or where they will find food and our biggest concern is that they could lose their lives due to stepping on a landmine."

Despite the international community urging the Thai government to act according to the principal of international law, the Thai government continues to ignore these grave concerns.

Nobody can assess the situation across the border.

Last night KWO was relieved to hear from the Chair of Karen Refugee Committee that the Thai army would not be forcing refugees to go back on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February. Today, we learned that this was not true and in reality people are being forced to go back.

We do not know what will happen tomorrow. There is a high likelihood that the Thai authority will continue to force these refugees to return to Burma.

We are appealing to His Majesty and the Thai government to not send the refugees back to this dangerous place. We also urge all concerned people to continue their efforts to advocate for this situation to stop.

For more information please contact: Blooming Night Zan at 089 269 6272