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Shan Women's Action Network

Statement in commemoration of the Silver Jubilee

28 March 2024

Today, we celebrate the Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) Silver Jubilee. At this occasion, we take this moment to reflect on our journey of resilience, relentless pursuit of justice, and unwavering dedication to the empowerment of Shan women, amidst the enduring armed conflict in our homeland. This Silver Jubilee is not only a commemoration of our past achievements, but also a reflection on future challenges and opportunities that await us.

During our recent Shan Women's Get-Together held on 25-26 March 2024, 66 resilient women came from across the border for the first time since 2019. This Get-Together served as an essential platform for exchanging experiences and confronting the escalating challenges within our communities. The growing turmoil triggered by the military coup, continued conflicts between the Burma Army and ethnic armed resistance organizations, have led to dire humanitarian crises. As a result, countless individuals have been displaced, many of whom are children, women, and the elderly. Additionally, the imposition of the new conscription laws by the military junta and aggressive recruitment by various armed actors have further intensified the longstanding challenges our communities have long faced.

Over the past quarter-century, SWAN upholds and is firmly committed to feminist principles, tirelessly advocating for gender equality and the rights and leadership of Shan women within their communities. Our efforts have led to groundbreaking reports drawing international attention to the plight of our people. This includes development of comprehensive education, well-being, and empowerment programs, significantly impacting thousands of lives. Despite challenges posed by state-sponsored oppression, political turmoil, and socio-economic deterioration, especially following the 2021 military coup, we have embraced a path of resistance and resilience, powered by education, awareness, and our community's indomitable spirit.

Looking forward, we reaffirm our commitment to serving our community, empowering women, and striving for a future where the diverse communities across Burma can co-exist in peace and prosperity. We call for greater cooperation and solidarity among all actors in Shan State to collectively overcome challenges and harness opportunities for the betterment of the communities we serve.

At the core of our mission for social and political change is the commitment to ethnic equality, self-determination, and federalism. These principles are crucial for addressing the deep-seated issues fueling civil strife in our homeland. SWAN is dedicated to fostering an inclusive future where diversity is not just tolerated but celebrated, ensuring that every voice is heard, and every right respected across our homeland.

In this significant moment, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our communities, supporters, partners, and allies worldwide. Your unwavering support and solidarity have been vital in navigating the most challenging times and sustaining our mission. As we move forward, we pledge to continue standing strong together, facing the challenges and seizing the opportunities ahead, with a collective commitment to justice, equality, and human rights for all.

Sisters of the Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN Sisters)

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