

## Representatives from Connecticut's Karen Community March in Washington D.C. in a Peaceful Demonstration on November 11, 2016

Thirty-one residents of Connecticut - many active members of the Karen Association of CT - originally from the Karen tribe of Burma, travelled to Washington D.C. and proudly joined almost 700 of their fellow Karen from 17 states across the United States for a peaceful demonstration in front of the White House on Veterans Day, November 11, 2016. The attendees were members of KOUSA (Karen Organization of the USA) who came together in community to show their unity with those currently living and suffering under the military regime of Burma.



The Karen marchers wanted to bring national attention to the fact that the numerous conflicts and acts of violence, being carried out by the Burmese military against the Karen, Shan and Kachin tribes, are taking place with the intent of destroying any possibility of establishing a democracy. The marchers were seeking the support of the American government to put pressure on the Burmese government to withdraw the military from the ethnic states of the Karen, Shan and Kachin so that a true democracy can be built that respects the human rights of all those living in Burma. Furthermore, they voiced their concern that the U.S. continue its support of an ethnic civil society as a key agent of democratic change in Burma.

The Connecticut group arrived in Washington in late morning and marched in front of both the White House and the Embassy of Burma displaying colorful signs stating, "Stop the violence in Burma", "End the war against our people". Some of the signs also announced, "Don't build dams on the Salween and Irrawaddy Rivers" due to the fact that China, Burma and Thailand have been negotiating to build dams on two major rivers in Burma which will displace thousands of tribal people from their homes as well as destroy their livelihood of farming and fishing.

The group brought the march to a close in late afternoon by singing the Karen National Anthem and headed back to Hartford inspired to continue defending the rights of their fellow Karen compatriots.

For more information on the Karen Association of Connecticut, please contact Saw Than (959-777-1361) or Soe Naing (959-200-1280) from the Connecticut Karen Community Association.