

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2022



**Kachin Women's Association
Thailand**

Published on September 9, 2023

Acknowledgement

Twenty-three years ago, on 9 September 1999, four pioneering women founded the Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT). The organization aimed to create a peaceful and safe Kachin society, focusing on women and children. The desire to create a better community arose as these women observed how Myanmar's central government ignored the Kachin community and its basic needs and rights. KWAT was established and is now an important component of a benevolent civil society network, which currently provides fundamental services for many communities.

An example of our work has been through our highly successful empowerment and capacity-building programs. KWAT supported and nurtured women and youth leaders serving their communities through these initiatives. KWAT's workload has grown exponentially over the years, reflecting the growing importance of the essential services and guidance we deliver daily. This would not be possible without the extraordinary work of our staff and the indispensable aid and assistance our supporters (and readers like you) provide. We desire to continue performing this vital work for succeeding generations, now and into the future.

We thank you for standing with us as we work towards justice in an equal society led by feminist values, and we are grateful for your support. We are thrilled to share with you this Annual Activity Report of 2022.

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Background

Since Burma achieved independence in 1948, fighting has never fully stopped in its many ethnic states, including Kachin and Northern Shan. Consecutive Myanmar leaders in power ignored Kachin and other ethnic nationalities' claims for equal political rights. The period of much-celebrated democratic transition was also characterized by a top-down political system that excluded marginalized ethnic, religious, and other minority communities from decision-making.

The offensive war launched by the Burmese Military has cost the Kachin community an unknown number of innocent lives. Displacement caused by the war and land grabs by private businesses with close ties to those in power has robbed the future of tens of thousands of our children. The impact of protracted intergenerational displacement is manifested in drug addiction and loss of educational opportunities for our young generation, i.e., our future leaders.

Kachin state is rich in natural resources. The extraction of resources largely by the military-affiliated private companies and people in power has led to forced land acquisitions, environmental degradation, and human rights violations.

Lack of peace and stability has been a primary push factor causing many Kachin to migrate and seek refuge in foreign countries, including Thailand. The number of Kachin migrants in Thailand has increased yearly, with women outnumbering men. Kachin migrants in Thailand have faced many hardships regarding safety, shelter, job opportunities, and access to education, with women experiencing difficulty, and requiring specific support.

Background

KWAT's initiatives, since 1999, have helped address the suffering and hardship of the Kachin people of Northern Myanmar as well as in neighboring Thailand. By providing these essential services, including humanitarian support, empowerment programs, and raising awareness on human rights and political issues, KWAT is now recognized as a key stakeholder in the region's Kachin community and civil society organizations.

Vision: The Kachin Women's Association Thailand envisions a peaceful and developed society rooted in gender and social equality, free of discrimination and oppression.

Mission: The Kachin Women's Association Thailand is a non-profit organization that works to eliminate discrimination and violence against women. It does so by enhancing women's living standards, enabling them to participate in decision-making at all levels, and strengthening the quest for social justice, peace, and development in the Kachin region.

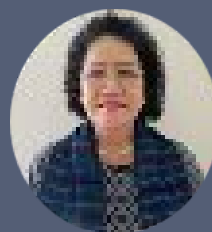
Founders of KWAT



Shirley Seng



Hkawn Tawng

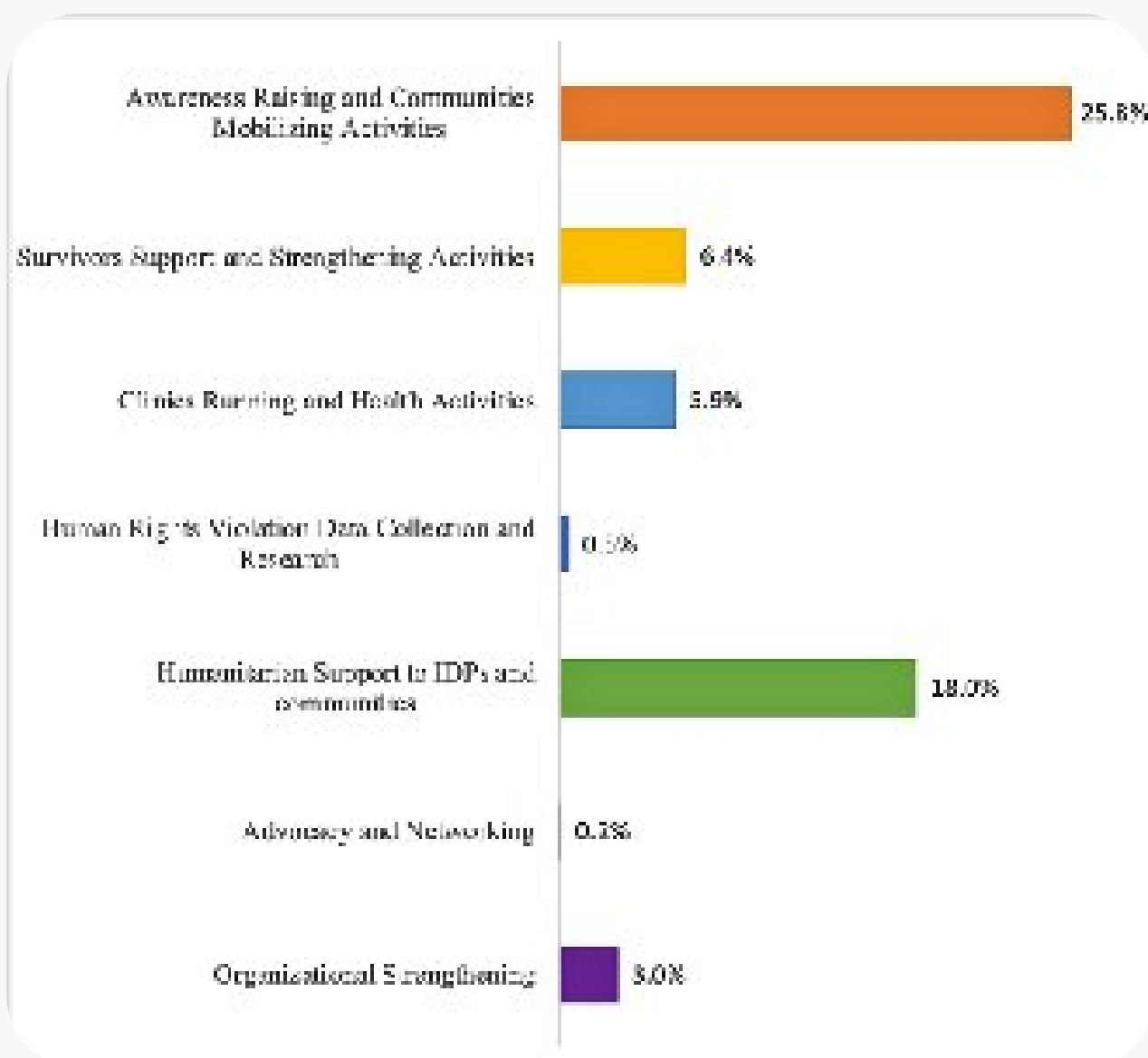


Linda Lahtaw



Jenet

Annual Financial Highlights

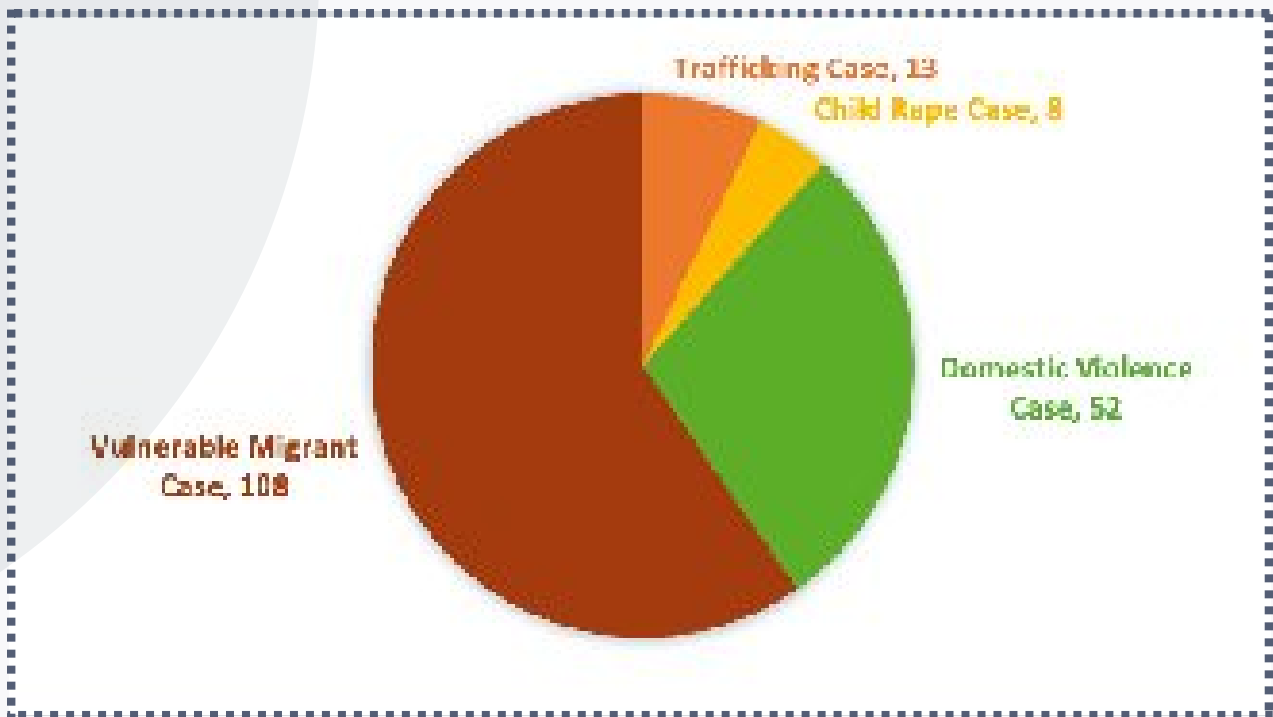


Anti-Trafficking Program

A devastating outcome of the protracted conflict and displacement of people has been the unprecedented number of women trafficked as sex slaves into China from the Kachin and Northern Shan States. This is the case for many Kachin women, particularly those under 25, who seek employment opportunities primarily to support their parents and young siblings. While the total numbers trafficked each year remain unknown, KWAT has been for the past twenty years working with authorities from both sides of the border in Myanmar and China in rescuing survivors and providing psychological support as the survivors try to return to some sense of normality to their lives.

Using the survivor-centered approach, KWAT provides the following services: Safe houses (shelters), Emergency Support including short-term and long-term Mental Health and Psychological support, legal support, consultation, livelihood support, survivors empowerment and capacity-building, and community outreach. These KWAT-led initiatives endeavor to prevent further human trafficking and reduce the stigmatization of the community's survivors.

Gender-based Violence and Human Trafficking Cases:

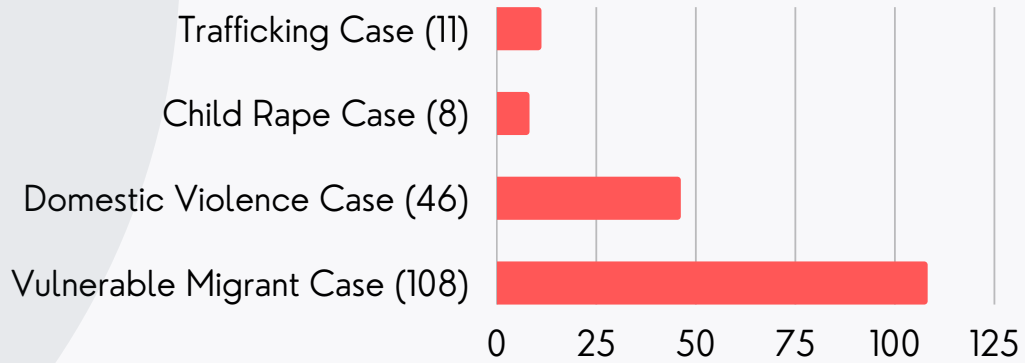


KWAT has collected a total of **181 cases** in 2022. The root cause of the case is the impact of Covid-19 pandemic situation and political instability in Myanmar. It has led to the problem of domestic violence, the lack of employment, and gradually causing high poverty in Myanmar which is a high threat for the vulnerable groups to be in great danger and fall into a trap by the trafficker. In this situation, the legal system is also not fully protecting the victims. KWAT and partner organizations approach the informal legal system, but in reality, the informal justice system also does not work well because of the community's miss understanding. So, the victims have faced no rights to equality or justice. According to the KWAT cases record file, it's worrying that young women and girls between the ages of 16 and 33 are being targeted for human trafficking and sexual violence. There is an increase in domestic violence cases because of overdose and addiction to drugs and unemployment.



Community Consultation Meeting

Safe House Service:



Types of Support: Shelter, Personal Hygiene kits, Food, Counselling, Transportation, Livelihood, Referral, Health Care, Nutrition support

Under Safe House Service, KWAT provides shelter, personal hygiene kits, food, counseling, transportation cost, livelihood, case referral, health care, and nutrition support for the survivors. KWAT has provided support to **173** survivors and among them, 46 survivors faced domestic violence, 11 survivors faced human trafficking, 8 survivors faced rape and 108 survivors faced vulnerable migrant cases.



Food Skills Training at IDP Camp



Coordination Meeting

Awareness-Raising Activities:

During 2022, KWAT has provided awareness-raising training to a total of **10,687** (1875 males and 8490 females) individuals in the communities in Kachin and Northern Shan State. The training included GBV, MHPSS, PSS, Trafficking and safe migration, paralegal training, community engagement, and facilitation, and outreach awareness activities.



GBV and PSEA Awareness at IDP Camp



GBV Awareness Training For Local Action Team, Mai Ja Yang

Political Empowerment Program

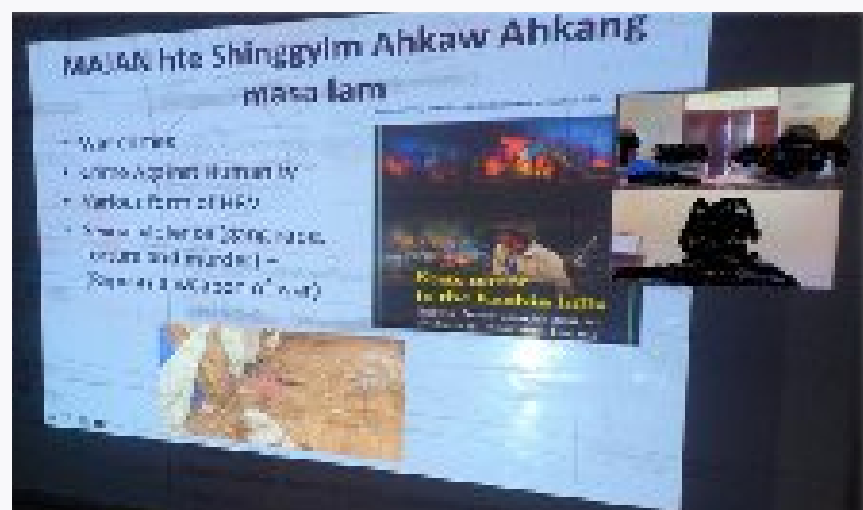
Recognizing the urgent need to nurture and support our future leaders, KWAT has conducted a 'Political Empowerment Program' for women and youth from Kachin and Northern Shan states for the past ten years. KWAT aims to strengthen local communities through political awareness, so they can protect and lead their communities. As a result, this program has focused on equipping participants with political knowledge and respecting and protecting the basic rights of all, in line with our feminist values and principles. Many graduates have become leading human and women's rights activists at both a local and international level.

Women Empowerment Activities:

Recognizing the urgent need to nurture and support our future leaders, KWAT has provided political awareness-raising training to women and youth from Kachin and Northern Shan states. KWAT aims to strengthen local communities through political awareness, so they can protect and lead their communities. In 2022, KWAT has trained about **1134** (300 males and 384 females) women and youths. KWAT provided 45 days training, one-day training, youth exchange on current political situation and 10 days training. The training modules include; International Humanitarian Law and Principles, Federalism, Human Rights, Federal Democracy, Women Rights, Gender, Civic Education and other general knowledge.



International Humanitarian Law Training



Political System and Government (Special talk), 45 days Training, Mai Ja Yang

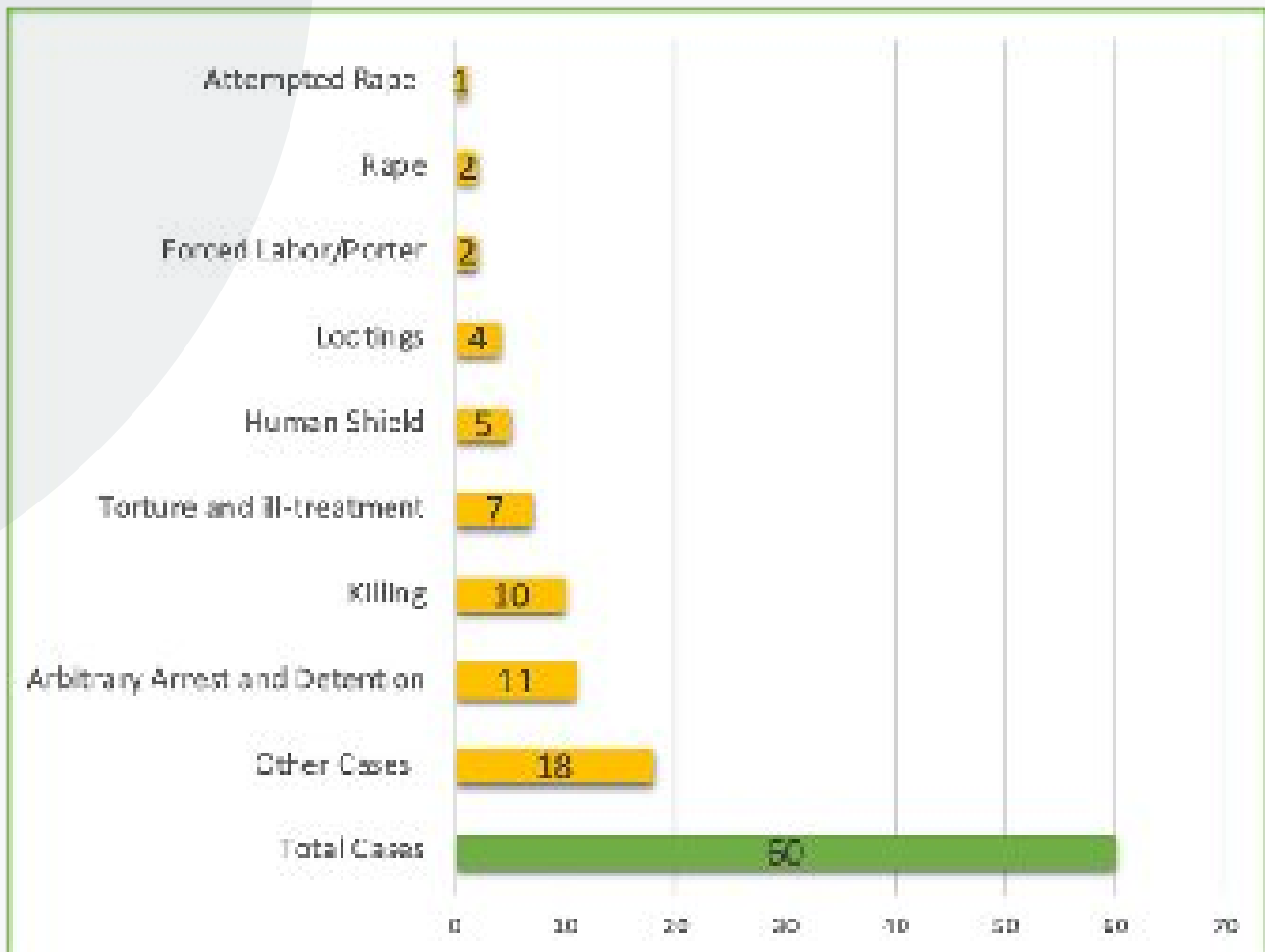
Documentation and Research Program

As a researched-based organization, our Documentation and Research Program (DRP) is the foundation for collecting and analyzing human rights violations across Kachin communities.

There is much evidence that the Burma military troops have been killing, torturing, arresting, and committing rapes that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Thus, data collection on human rights violations is a must and a continual need to do at the current political unrest situation in Myanmar. KWAT has been doing data collection on human rights violations in a conflict setting for many years with aiming of providing evidence when transitional justice is in place in Burma. For the short-term aims, we have been using the documents as advocacy tools to provide the situation of human rights violations in Kachin and call the international community for an international justice and accountability mechanism in Burma.

This program has enabled us to undertake evidence-based advocacy and, most importantly, organize immediate support for survivors and their family members who have been injured or traumatized by their abuse. The support includes creating safe spaces and platforms for the survivors to speak the truth, and to connect with others who have gone through similar experiences.

Human Rights Violation Data Collection Cases List



KWAT has collected a total of **60** human rights violation cases in Kachin and Northern Shan states in 2022. Types of issues that KWAT has collected include attempted rape, rape, forced labor/porter, lootings, human shield, torture and ill-treatment, killing, arbitrary arrest and detention, and other cases (arbitrary shooting, shelling, landmine, airstrike, etc.). Using these evidence-based data, KWAT published the below report highlighting human rights violations by the Burma Military in Kachin and Northern Shan states.



Burma Army Airstrike, A Nang Pa

Picture source: online

Human Rights Violation Survivors/Human Rights Defenders Supporting List

Cash Support for Food

23



Cash Support for Healthcare

98



Cash Support for Emergency Relocation

8



Though after 2 years of a military coup, human rights violations have been continuously happening and human rights violations (HRV) survivors/defenders are still at high risk of traveling and cannot go back and stay with their families. In the armed conflict areas, transportation and communication are becoming very difficult to travel and access to the remote areas particularly delivering basic assistance such as rice and medicine to the needed community. Thus, KWAT provided emergency support to a total of **129** HRV survivors/defenders in 2022.

Raising Awareness on Transitional Justice and Accountability

Transitional Justice Training

109



International Accountability Mechanisms Training

58



We have provided transitional justice and accountability training to a total of **167** community leaders who are actively involved in collecting HRV cases happening in the communities. They collaborate with the DRP team to collect the data and support the community's emergency needs and usually, they have to travel for supporting to communities and provide ground human rights situation information.

Vocational Education Training for GBV Women Survivors

Sewing Training



Hairdressing Training



Pig Food Production



Basic Bakery Training



Cooking Training



We have provided vocational education (VE) training to a total of **210** Gender-based Violence women survivors with the aim of creating income opportunities in their families. The training included Basic Bakery, pigs feed production, cooking, sewing, and hairdressing. The 107 VE students had received the start-up kit and they are starting their small business and daily income.

Community Awareness-Raising Activities



KWAT has provided community awareness activities on GBV, PSEA, WPS, and 21st skills training to a total of **2,973** IDPs and host communities in Kachin state.

Health Program

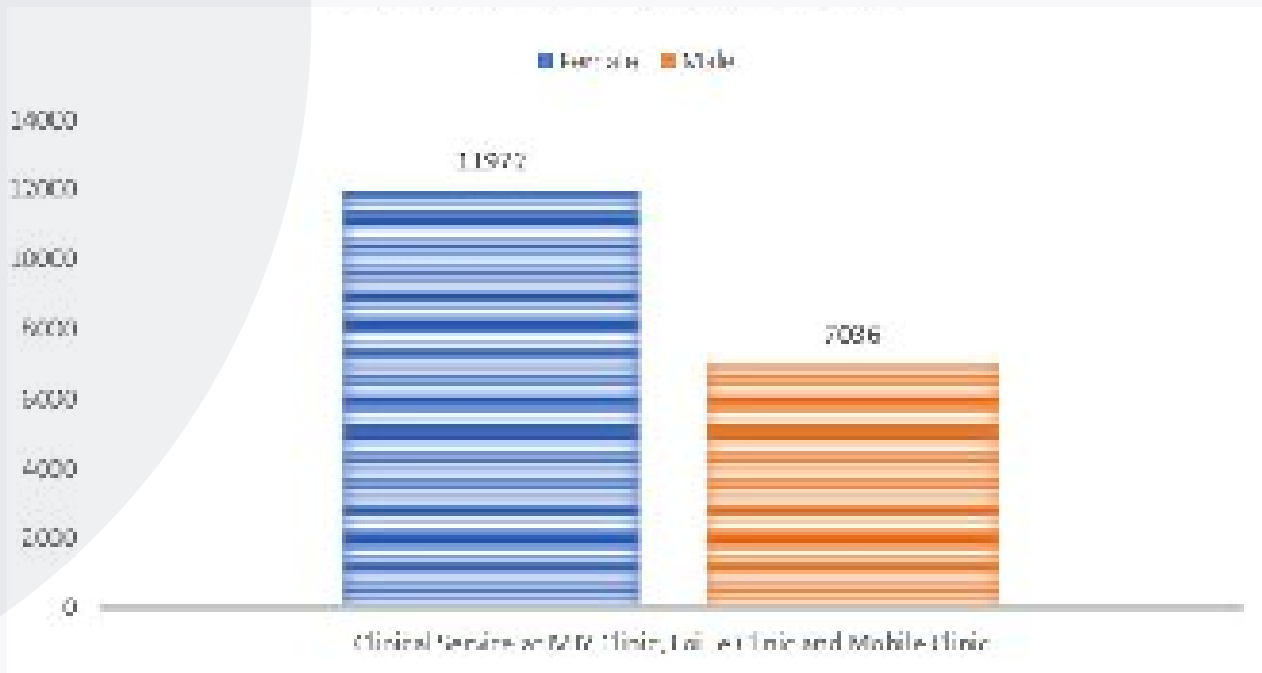
KWAT's health program workers have been working around the clock to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities for more than ten years. There are many areas of Kachin and Northern Shan states, which the Central authority has never managed to control historically, but has been administered by Kachin Independence Organization. KWAT's health program was initiated in 2003. After 2011 and the resumption of civil war, a requirement for greater healthcare forced KWAT into expanding healthcare services further across Kachin and Northern Shan States in areas inaccessible or unattended by the KIO or Central government. The situation became especially urgent after the Central authority ordered international non-profit organizations to evacuate from Kachin-controlled territory. As the war intensified, KWAT became the sole and essential health service provider to many communities, including those residing in Internally Displaced Camps. Today, more than 20,000 people, mostly women and children, rely on KWAT's health services which continue to expand.

KWAT administers three clinics in the Mai Ja Yang and Loi Je-Seng Ja IDP Camps in Kachin State and Kut Kai, Northern Shan State. It provides general medical treatment, maternal and child health care, laboratory and school health services, and adolescent reproductive health training across 60 schools. Thus, KWAT staff provide a wide range of essential services to villagers, particularly those residing in remote areas.

KWAT also annually collects family planning data in targeted villages and camps to identify high health-risk situations. For example, since 2021, KWAT has been working in these districts for two reasons. First, to strengthen the local health system and second, to promote health awareness and provide basic treatment, especially in Maternal and Child Health treatment. Although it may be said educating the parents of teenagers about reproductive health has been a challenge, it can also be an opportunity. Our campaign is often met with skepticism or perceived as encouraging early sexual activity among the youth by residents. However, KWAT's programs have effectively raised awareness of teenage pregnancies, the risks of terminating, and the possibility of serious medical complications resulting from termination.

Being a respected women's organization and service provider for the Kachin community, we are fortunate to be in a situation we have been allowed to engage the neighborhood who trust us with their care. We do so with warmth, patience, and cultural sensitivity. We are changing the hearts and minds of parents and leaders, and confident we are changing how the Kachin community looks at sex education. Not as a taboo subject but a positive demonstration of how informed family planning advice can lead to positive outcomes.

General Health Treatment



KWAT's three clinics in the Mai Ja Yang and Loi Je-Seng Ja IDP Camps in Kachin State and Kut Kai, Northern Shan State provided general basic treatment. KWAT reached out to the most vulnerable population and hard-to-reach areas. Treatment provided at the clinics include;

- ARI/RTI
- Accident/minor surgical injuries
- Asthma
- Bacteria disease
- Beri Beri
- Chronic medical disease
- Congenital abnormalities
- DHF (dengue hemorrhagic fever)
- Diarrhoea/GE (gastroenteritis)
- Dysentery
- Ear problem/disease
- Eye problem/disease
- Genito-urinary diseases
- GI problem
- Gynecological problem
- Hematological disorder
- Malnutrition
- Meningitis and encephalitis
- Mental disorders
- Neonatal problem
- Obstetric problem
- Parasitic disease
- Pneumonia
- Skin infection/disease
- STI (sexually transmitted infections)
- Viral diseases
- Other



Implant Removing in JRY Clinic, Mai Ja Yang

Health Awareness-raising



Provided awareness-raising activities such as health education, school health, hygiene, reproductive health workshop, and adolescent reproductive health training to **4056 Males and 8593 Females**: Health Education, School Health, Hygiene, Reproductive Health Workshop, and Adolescent Reproductive Health Training.



Child delivery in JRY Clinic, Mai Ja Yang

Village Health Outreach Activity, Je Ring Yang Village



Humanitarian Assistance

The humanitarian context in Myanmar has been serious for decades. There is community displacement and gross human rights violations with ongoing conflict. With the increase in conflict and displacement in different areas of Myanmar, responding to these new expansions of the humanitarian crisis is critical. In this context, it is vital to support local actors intimately familiar with the regions and context already providing humanitarian and protection support to the displaced people. In 2022, KWAT offered humanitarian assistance to **3,195** beneficiaries, including conflict-affected communities, IDPs, women-led households, pregnant women, and disabled persons in Kachin and Northern Shan State. The support items included in-kind basic food support, cash support, and personal protective materials.



Distribution to IDPs, RC IDP camp

Income Generation Project

As of 1999, KWAT's income generation project, based mainly in Chiang Mai, Thailand, offers vocational training to Kachin women recently rescued from trafficking. The participants make these products by hand, and KWAT markets them. This program allows these women to earn independent income for themselves and their children while fostering self-confidence and self-esteem. They also make a valuable contribution towards funding several KWAT programs in Thailand and Kachin State. Profits from selling these products raise funds for female survivors of trafficking.



Hand Made Training

Expression - 1

"I am Dr. Maran La Pa, the medical superintendent of Mai Ja Yang Hospital. Previously, the hospital couldn't provide special latrines for disabled persons. It only offered public toilets, and it made the disabled persons difficult to use the public toilet. The hospital's public latrine is inconvenient for people with disabilities, and even the pregnant mother had to go to the toilet with her chair. Also, it is a public toilet with only one entrance. Thus, persons with wheelchairs were very challenged to use the toilets. Having no choice made the disabled forced to use the public toilets, making them unsafe and inconveniences.

The KWAT initially met with the medical superintendent of Mai Ja Yang Hospital in September 2021 to discuss infrastructure construction for people with disabilities. In addition, the medical superintendent addressed the structure of the latrine for disabled people with the hospital management committee, and they decided to build the latrine in the appropriate location. There is no professional engineer for construction in Mai Ja Yang, so the KWAT team searched for latrine designs on Google and discussed the plan with the medical superintendent for suggestions and information about the constructors.



Disable Latrine Construction for EHO hospital
(50 - 75 bedded) in Mai Ja Yang

*The KWAT organization led the latrine construction process in the hospital. It made it convenient for people with disabilities to use when they received medical treatment at the hospital. Some could use the latrine by themselves with their wheelchairs. Since then, **I found that disabled patients are delighted, which has solved their feeling of being discriminated against in public places.** Many disabled patients benefit from this construction project because they feel safe and easily use it. Therefore, I would like to thank KWAT, and donors for fulfilling the needed part to be inclusive in the hospital. The local health department would like to provide full facilities for the public. However, when we couldn't offer it very soon, it was beneficial that the KWAT organization led this kind of construction to assist disabled patients.*

Expression - 2

*'''According to her interview, Lazing Hkawn Doi joined and attended the sewing machine training provided by the KWAT team for about three months. She subsequently joined another sewing training provided by the Karum Zinghri organization. Through it, she got the basic skill of sewing from KWAT. Now, she can start her professional career and support her family as much as she can by earning from her job. If there are festivals or celebrity days, she gets dresses or outfits to sew. She gets fully occupied with the sewing machine on those days. **She could sew clothes for her family and other neighborhoods, which helped them save money on clothes.** She wants to progress in her skill even though she cannot afford it. She expects to get support from the KWAT team for people like her within her community.'''*



Lazing Hkawn Doi (Sewing training)

Expression - 3

"I am Nhkum Ja Seng San. I joined the 45-day training to gain awareness about politics and human rights. I wanted to understand how I could assist our Kachin ethnic community, facing challenges such as displacement and food shortages due to the civil war. I sought information on whom to contact and what actions I could take to address these problems, particularly the issue of refugee-like living conditions. During the 45-day training, I expected to deepen my knowledge of politics, human rights, and women's rights. **I acquired various skills and insights throughout the program, including leadership qualities, an understanding of gender discrimination, human rights issues, anti-trafficking measures, federalism, and democracy.** I encountered certain challenges during the training. I struggled with speaking in front of an audience, approaching trainers with inquiries, responding to questions, and participating in group presentations. **However, by the end of the training, I witnessed significant improvements in my communication and social skills.** I can now confidently address a group and deliver presentations. Additionally, I gained a clearer understanding of my expectations from the training. Reflecting on my journey, I realize I have absorbed and comprehended each topic covered during the program. Moving forward, **I am eager to contribute my learnings from the training to the community, with a particular focus on youth, women, and other community members. I am committed to sharing my knowledge and experiences as much as possible.**"



Human rights training, 45 days training

Expression - 4

"I am 38 years old mother with five children, and I live in Seng Mai Pa village. After I attended three days of gender awareness training and gender awareness raising activities provided by KWAT, I could **reduce violence with my husband because I could make him aware concern about gender equality**. And then, I knew the previous way of teaching my children was wrong. In the previous, I used violent words and shouted during the admonishment of children.

"Now, I knew that manner was violent. Therefore, I can teach my children the right way. From the PSS awareness session given by the KWAT organization, I learned how to control my mind and reduce stress. I also learned the method of liquid soap making. It benefits our family, and we still use liquid soap now. Those are things I have learned from the training. Due to awareness raising in our village, the rate of domestic violence in families and small fighting each other were reduced."



Psycho-social Support Activity

Advocacy

Ongoing fighting and Burmese Military abuses have caused displacement in Kachin areas. Emergency humanitarian support through cross border aids is vital important for the current situation in Kachin areas, because the Burmese military are blocking aids to ten of thousands of internal displaced along the China-Burma border. Using confirmed testimonies from its survivor-centered Research and Documentation Program, KWAT has been advocating for justice to bring closure for those who have suffered at the hands of the Burmese Military and end the impunity of perpetrators. KWAT have been engaging with The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) for submission of human rights violation cases, for the ongoing preparation of criminal prosecution of perpetrators. KWAT is consistently engaged in documentation of abuses, working across its networks of grass roots organisations and trusted informants to gather information and meticulously fact check with local sources.

In 2022 KWAT released two full reports on the situation of human rights violations in Kachin, collaborating on 'Resistance' with HURFOM and ND-Burma. These reports detailed the types of abuses that were taking place, where they happened and highlighting the context of the abuses. 'New Threats from the Air' was a standalone report, focusing on the time period between November 2021 and April 2022, where airstrikes and destruction of village property increased dramatically in Kachin, leaving conflict-affected populations even more vulnerable to harm. In January, KWAT joined 286 organisations in making a joint statement to the UN Security Council, urging that an open briefing take place to engage UN member states to act on the crisis in Myanmar. KWAT also joined other civil society groups to publish open letters on ASEAN's complacency and ineffective action on Myanmar, and to the UK government to sanction all companies selling aviation fuel to the Myanmar military. In October, KWAT released a press statement demanding the UN Security Council's immediate action regarding the escalating conflict in Kachin.

The following reports and statements were published/released in 2022 to give a voice to those often silenced, marginalized, and persecuted. Below are all the publications put forward by KWAT and with Partners in 2022.



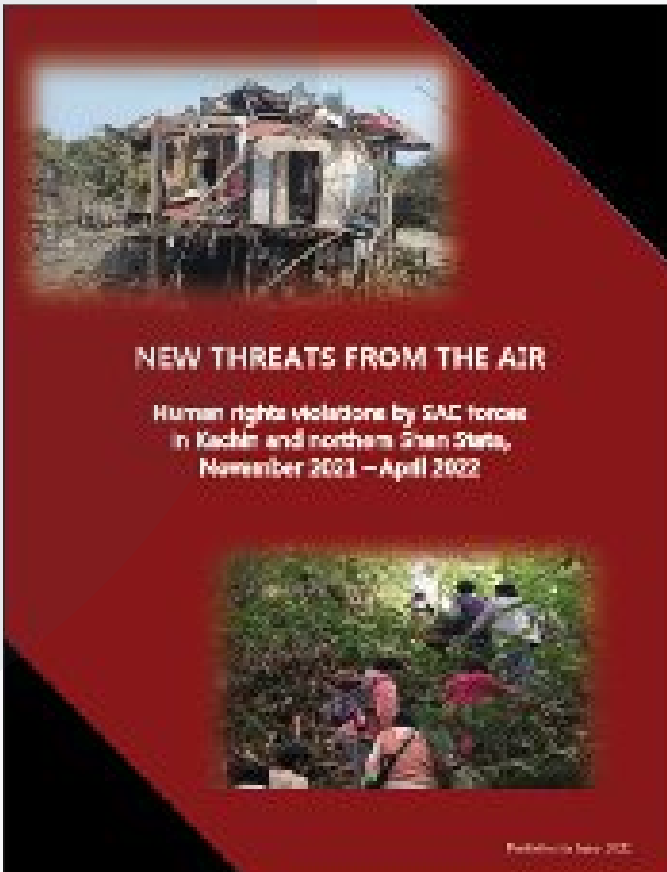
Joint statement on Myanmar UN Security Council open briefing (English)

Endorsed in January 2022

RESISTANCE (Report
Burmese Version)

Published in March 2022 by
KWAT and Networks





NEW THREATS FROM THE AIR (English)

Published in June 2022 by KWAT

The attack in Kachin State must prompt UN Security Council's urgent action against Myanmar military junta (English)

Released in October 2022



Conclusion

In conclusion, the Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT) has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to creating a better society for the Kachin community in Myanmar and Thailand. Its dedication to serving and empowering the most marginalized segments of the society has been noteworthy in the past year, as reflected in this 2022 Activity Report.

In terms of main programs, the Anti-Trafficking program stands out, through which KWAT has diligently and relentlessly been working to prevent and combat human trafficking. The survivor-centered approach has led to substantial support for survivors, providing safe houses, emergency support, legal assistance, and livelihood support, among other services. The effectiveness of these initiatives is a testament to KWAT's dedication to eliminating this grave human rights violation.

Further, the Health Program has offered indispensable services to areas in Kachin and Northern Shan States, that have often been neglected by the Central government. KWAT has bridged this gap, providing essential health services, including maternal and child healthcare, school health services, and teenage reproductive health education. The organization's ability to engage with the community while being culturally sensitive has been vital in changing mindsets towards important issues like sex education.

At the heart of KWAT's work is its vision for a peaceful and developed society rooted in gender and social equality. This has guided our mission to eliminate discrimination and violence against women by enhancing their living standards, promoting their participation in decision-making at all levels, and striving for social justice, peace, and development in the Kachin region.

In terms of advocacy, KWAT has used a strategic approach to bring to light the issues faced by the Kachin community. Through the publication of evidence-based testimonies, engaging with media, and collaborating with national, regional, and international organizations, KWAT has amplified the voices of the often silenced, marginalized, and persecuted.


The impact and success of KWAT's initiatives wouldn't be possible without the support of our dedicated staff and generous donors. As we continue to strive for a just and equal society guided by feminist values, we humbly ask for your continued support in fulfilling our mission. Your generous contributions will play a pivotal role in ensuring that KWAT continues to extend its reach and deepens its impact, allowing us to empower and improve the lives of the Kachin community, both now and for generations to come.

Acronyms

KWAT:	Kachin Women's Association Thailand
MHPSS:	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
PSS:	Psycho-Social Support
GBV:	Gender-Based Violence
PSEA:	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
IDPs:	Internally Displaced Persons
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
HRV:	Human Rights Violation
HRD:	Human Rights Defender
CDM:	Civil Disobedience Movement
VE:	Vocational Education
WPS:	Women, Peace and Security
KBC:	Kachin Baptist Convention
DRP:	Documentation and Research Program
TOT:	Training of Trainer
UNSCR:	United Nations Security Council Resolution
PFA:	Psychological First Aid



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