



SITUATION UPDATE

New arrivals fleeing military attacks in Karen State

An increased number of people are now fleeing to Thailand, following several days of shelling and fighting between armed groups in Karen state, Burma.

The first report came on the 6th June with some 1163 people crossing the border as a result of the fighting. As of 9th June, more than 4000 people have come across the border.

People fleeing are mainly women and children as some men are staying hidden in the jungle to keep an eye on their villages and possessions. A majority of the people who have fled to Thailand were residents of Ler Per Her IDP camp in Karen State.

Preliminary reports from discussions with new arrivals says that some people are fleeing from fighting between the DKBA (Democratic Karen Buddhist Army – affiliated with the Burmese army) and KNLA (Karen National Liberation Army). Others are fleeing from expected fighting, for fear of being subject to forced recruitment, or forced to act as porters and human mine sweepers for the armed forces.

Most of the new arrivals have settled in 4 different locations north of Mae Sot, Tak province.

TBBC responded to the influx of new arrivals immediately. In coordination with local Thai authorities, UNHCR and other NGO's, TBBC is providing basic food rations (fish paste and rice), plastic sheeting, blankets, mosquito nets and other essential items. Torrential rain in the area is making shelter difficult.

The attacks appear to be a sustained effort from the Burmese army to take control of the border, and it is unknown for how long the displacement will go on. Most of the new arrivals want to stay as close to their villages as possible to be able to go home quickly once the situation has calmed down. TBBC was told by new arrivals that one man who went back to his village to look after his livestock got shot by Burmese soldiers.

On 9 June, TBBC is still receiving reports on shelling and fighting between the armed groups in the border area.

Discussions are ongoing between UNHCR and the Thai Ministry of Interior as to whether people should be located to a central area.