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BURMA Thousands of Christians to unite in global prayer for Burma

Thousands of Christians worldwide will unite in prayer for Burma next week, as CSW plans to host a global day of prayer for the nation, together with Karen Aid and Partners Relief & Development, to be held at the Emmanuel Centre in Westminster on Saturday 13 March.

A prominent member of the Karen Refugee Committee (KRC), Htooku Hsarsay, will tell delegates about the challenging issues currently facing Burmese exiles in the UK today. Htooku was only eleven years old when the Burma Army attacked her village in Karen State, killing her father and forcing the family into the jungle. They lived as refugees in Thailand for the next twenty years, before moving to England in 2007.

The prayer day will also incorporate a political update from CSW's East Asia Team Leader, Benedict Rogers, who has recently returned from a fact-finding visit to the Thai-Burma border with yet more evidence of human rights violations.

Sarah Armitage, UK National Director for Partners Relief & Development, a relief organisation working in the conflict zones of eastern Burma, will speak about recent oppression in eastern Burma, particularly that suffered by the Shan ethnic minority group. Sarah spent two years on the Thai-Burma border overseeing the care of 1,300 refugee and migrant children.

Worship at the event will be led by Joe Davison, alongside contemporary Burmese praise to be sung by Karen vocalists living in the UK.

The Global Day of Prayer for Burma first began in 1997, initiated by Christians Concerned for Burma at the request of Burma's democracy leader, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. It has since become an internationally recognised event attended by those struggling to see an end to suffering in Burma.

Benedict Rogers, CSW's East Asia Team Leader and author of *A Land Without Evil: Stopping the Genocide of Burma's Karen People*, said: "This year is a crucial year for Burma, as the regime plans to hold sham elections to entrench its power. It is therefore vital that we unite in prayer for the nation - pray for peace, true freedom, and real change, an end to the regime's crimes against humanity and reign of terror, the release of political prisoners, and for strength for Burma's democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi."

CSW launched a joint campaign with Partners Relief and Development in 2008, to highlight human rights violations in Burma. The Change for Burma! Campaign includes calls for a case to be brought to the International Criminal Court. Details can be found at <http://www.changeforburma.org>. Delegates will have the opportunity to take part in this campaign on the day.