

# Descriptions of War and Healing by Karen Refugees on the Thai-Burmese Border

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## Abstract

This paper explores the phenomenological realities of war, trauma and healing by highlighting community-based conceptions and descriptions of war and healing by Karen refugees, who are situated along the Thai-Burmese border. The Karen refugees are one of the ethnic minorities in Burma that are being displaced as a result of intensified efforts by the Burmese military regime since the late 1980s. Based on the output of the different trauma healing workshops that I conducted inside the Karen Refugee Camp, I discovered that no matter how victimized they may feel about themselves, Karen refugees are capable of naming and responding to their collective sense of reality and can be active participants in their own healing and community building.

**Keywords:** American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Burma, healing, Karen refugees, Karen Women's Organization (KWO), refugees, resiliency, Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA), trauma, war pictures, workshop