



MYANMAR · KARENNI STATE · WET SEASON

TEACHING THE RECORD

We went to Southeast Asia to strengthen local media and document a war the world has stopped watching. What the people there needed was not our footage. It was the ability to shoot their own.

BY THEOREN NEAL · PEACEMAKER COALITION



A training session along the Thai border, before the crossing opened. Participants are not identified by name or location in anything we publish.

Our team set out to support humanitarian work tied to the conflict in Myanmar. We had two jobs. Strengthen what local media could do on its own, and document a crisis that has largely fallen out of the news.

We planned before we left. Photo stories, video projects, and a set of media initiatives we thought we could deliver on the ground. Then we arrived in the wet season and started adjusting.

The first work happened outside Myanmar. We trained local news organizations and humanitarian NGOs working with refugees, covering journalism fundamentals and practical media skills they could use immediately.

HELD AT THE BORDER

Our first attempt to cross from southern Thailand stalled. Heavy rain closed the route and military activity picked up. We waited several days.

That delay turned into the most useful week of the trip. We sat with community leaders and with refugee rehabilitation teams, and we listened. By the time the crossing opened, we understood the humanitarian picture far better than any briefing had prepared us for.

“TRAINING IS THE PART WE CAN GIVE. IT IS ALSO THE PART NOBODY CAN CONFISCATE.”

INTO KARENNI STATE

An opening came later. We entered Karenni State with permission from the Karenni National Defense Force.



Working through a session. We divided the team by area and regrouped each night.

There we ran training in three areas.

- STILL PHOTOGRAPHY
- BASIC JOURNALISM
- COMBAT FORENSICS

That last one carries the most weight. It is the discipline of gathering evidence so it holds up later. What to capture, how to record where and when you captured it, and how to keep it intact. Done properly, it turns an account of an atrocity into something a court can use.

Participants learned to build credible evidence of human rights abuses committed by the military junta, and to report on what was happening around them more safely and more effectively.

WORKING ALONGSIDE

We worked with Antonio Graceffo, a war correspondent who has reported from Myanmar for

more than twenty years.

His experience shaped what we did. He guided us, opened access to camps for internally displaced persons, and connected us with communities living directly inside the conflict. He also documented our training in his own reporting.



Reviewing frames between sessions.

A SMALL TEAM

We are not a large organization, and Karenni State is not a place that waits for you. Conditions changed daily.

So we split up. Different members covered different areas, then we regrouped every evening to trade what we had seen, read the situation again, and decide where to be the next morning.

By the end, the people we trained were not our subjects. They were the crew. They already had cameras and phones, so we did not spend the time on framing and sound. We trained to what they actually needed. Combat forensics. Sensitive site exploitation, which is the step by step method of photographing a scene so the evidence still means something to a court months later.

That is what we left behind, and it stays there.

AS REPORTED

Antonio Graceffo sat in on this training and wrote it up for Mizzima on August 13, 2025, under the headline “Burma Resistance Forces Receive Training in Combat Forensics: Documenting Junta Atrocities.” He covered the organisation separately for The Gateway Pundit in August 2026. Both are listed on our press page at peacemakercoalition.com.