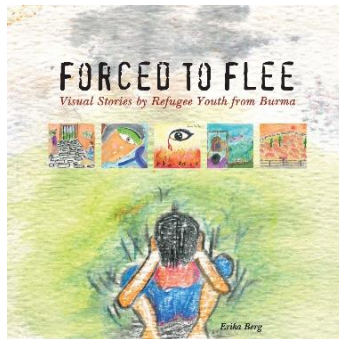


PRESS RELEASE
Immediate Release

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Equipped with Watercolor Crayons and Paper: A Child's-Eye View of Burma's Struggle for Democracy

Bearing witness to the real-life stories of children forced to flee violent conflict and persecution in their native land, ***Forced to Flee: Visual Stories by Refugee Youth from Burma***, edited by Erika Berg, illustrates how a single narrative image can tell the story of a thousand words while building bridges of understanding. Supported by the book's "Ways to Help" appendix and dynamic website, the youths' powerful paintings ignite our empathy and inspire action on behalf of refugees and many others forced to flee.



For over 50 years, Burma, also known as Myanmar, was among the most isolated and oppressed nations in the world. Recently, the government has begun to implement democratic reforms. Yet beyond the media spotlight, human rights abuses have continued. This poignant, timely and visually-arresting book honors the stories of refugees denied their rights, stories of trauma, resilience, courage, perseverance and irrepressible hope.

Since 2010, Erika Berg has facilitated over 40 visual storytelling workshops in and along the borders of Burma as well as in the United States and Canada. The workshops took place in refugee camps, a shelter for children who had been trafficked, orphanages, boarding houses, clinics, monasteries, churches, offices, community centers, a city dump, schools, a textile factory, libraries, homes and open fields.

In *Forced to Flee*, 196 of the youths' "visual stories" bridge language and cultural barriers that have shielded the outside world from haunting, humbling and awe-inspiring truths behind Burma's decades-long civil war. Calling on our conscience and sense of justice, this deeply personal book is a testament to the indomitable spirit of those forced to flee injustice in Burma, and to the transformative power of art.

100% of the royalties from the sale of the book will be **donated** to refugee youth leaders dedicated to healing ethnic and religious divides and promoting peaceful coexistence in and along the borders of Burma.

About Erika Berg: After hearing one too many stories of injustice from her ESL students, Erika launched "Exiled Voices for Justice," a series of documentary screenings, Q&A panel discussions and advocacy fairs about cultures in conflict. She also began collecting the life stories of refugee youth. After facilitating visual storytelling workshops with more than 700 refugee youth along the Thai-Burma border and the India-Burma border, Erika curated an exhibit of their paintings at Seattle Art Museum, jumpstarting her work on *Forced to Flee*. Erika lives in Seattle with her husband and young daughter, both active supporters of the project.

Media inquiries: Please contact Erika at erika.burmavisionsforpeace@gmail.com or 206.380.1804. For a preview of the book and downloadable PDF of the book's Press Kit, visit www.burmavisionsforpeace.org.

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Full-color throughout: 196 "visual stories," six hand-painted maps and 64 photographs

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To order *Forced to Flee* online: www.burmavisionsforpeace.org