

Naypyidaw must immediately stop its attacks in central Shan State and let communities return home

Statement by Shan Community Based Organisations

November 6, 2015

Shan Community Based Organisations (CBOs) strongly denounce the current military offensive by Naypyidaw in central Shan State, which has caused civilian injury and displaced over 6,000 villagers since it began one month ago on October 6.

This large scale military operation, involving 14 battalions, heavy artillery and fighter jets, has terrorized local communities, causing women, children and elderly from 22 villages in Tang Yan, Mong Hsu, Mong Nawng and Ke See townships to abandon their homes. The indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas, including during sacred Buddhist festivals, makes it clear that Naypyidaw has no respect for human rights or humanitarian law.

Those displaced are now sheltering in makeshift camps, in urgent need of humanitarian aid and protection. Yet the Burma Army is continuing to launch attacks close to the camps, and has started blocking humanitarian access to the displaced.

To add insult to injury, Naypyidaw has used the fighting as a pretext to cancel the election in Mong Hsu Ke See townships, depriving local people of their democratic right to vote. It is well known the ruling military-backed party would have lost the vote in these areas.

This offensive, in violation of an existing ceasefire agreement with the Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA), makes it clear that Naypyidaw has no desire for peace. If they did, they would have been inclusive in inviting all groups to sign their “Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement” and ended all military offensives, to pave the way for political dialogue. Naypyidaw is simply posturing at peace-building, while continuing their decades-long strategy of invading ethnic territories to plunder their rich natural resources. In Shan State, this includes the building of large dams on the Salween, to export hydropower.

Shan CBOs demand that Naypyidaw immediately end their military offensives in central Shan State and other ethnic areas of Burma, and impose a moratorium on natural resource extraction in ethnic areas, until there is genuine federal reform.

Shan CBOs urge the international community, particularly those coming to monitor Burma’s elections, to publicly denounce Naypyidaw’s ongoing offensives against the ethnic peoples. The immediate ending of these offensives must be a benchmark for any further engagement with Naypyidaw.

Shan CBOs also urge international donors to provide humanitarian aid to those displaced by the recent conflict in central Shan State, through local community based groups or civil society organizations.

Endorsed by the following Shan CBOs:

1. California Shan Social and Cultural Society (USA)
2. Singapore Shan Family
3. Shan Refugee Organization (Malaysia)
4. Tai Youth Network
5. Shan State Youth Network Committee
6. Kham Ku Center for Study and Development
7. Mauk Kon Organization
8. Shan Farmers' Network
9. Shan Human Rights Foundation
10. Shan Women's Action Network
11. Shan Youth Power
12. Shan Youth Power Group
13. Shan Sapawa Environmental Organization
14. Shan State Development Foundation
15. Shan Youth Network Group
16. Tai Youth Organization
17. Shan Youth Organization
18. Koong Jor Refugee Committee
19. Shan Refugee Committee
20. Worker Solidarity Association
21. Migrant Worker Federation
22. Jao Khur Tai Organization
23. Shan Students' Union (Chiang Mai)
24. Shan Students' Union (Bangkok)
25. Shan Literature and Culture Society (Chiang Mai)
26. Shan Literature and Culture Association (Mong Hsu)
27. Toom Toan Tai Organization

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