



## **Situation Update by the Shan Human Rights Foundation**

**27<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

### **Looting by Burma Army soldiers in Shan and Ta'ang(Palaung) villages near Laogai**

During the past week, groups of Burma Army soldiers have been patrolling in Shan and Ta'ang (Palaung) villages near the Kokang capital Laogai, looting food and other possessions, and destroying property of local villagers.

Most of the inhabitants of these villages had fled to China since fighting broke out on February 9, but some had stayed, mostly elders, to look after their houses. These villagers reported how soldiers had gone from house to house looting and destroying property.

On February 21, soldiers entered Na Sai, a Ta'ang(Palaung) Palaung village of over 80 households, and looted the houses. One villager was forced to kneel at gunpoint with his hands behind his head, while troops stole his mobile phone, money, and two motorbikes from him.

On February 23, soldiers carried out looting in Na Bang, a Shan village of over 30 households. One refugee from Na Bang described how her brother-in-law was forced to kneel before the soldiers with his hands behind his head, while the troops stole food from his kitchen.

On February 25, a group of about 10 soldiers entered Goong Sar, a Shan village of over 70 households, forcing residents to squat down at gunpoint with their hands behind their heads. 10 people had their mobile phones seized. One person lost two computers. Another lost his van. Food and money was also taken. One man who was found with a photo taken together with a Kokang soldier was threatened with jail if he did not hand over all his money – 60,000 yuan.

If houses were not inhabited, the soldiers broke down the doors, seized what they wanted, and also destroyed possessions, including one villager's car.

Villagers from Goong Sar and Na Sai also reported that their sugar cane fields had been burned down by the Burma Army since the fighting began, to prevent Kokang troops from hiding in the fields. Most of the sugar cane fields were about to be harvested, causing a huge financial loss for the villagers, who could earn as much as 300,000 yuan from a large field.

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