

Press release by Action for Shan State Rivers

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## **Foreign dam-builders must stop colluding with Burma's murderous regime and pull out of Shan State**

To mark the International Day of Action for Rivers, communities across Shan State are posting slogans on riverbanks calling for a stop to all new dams, which will earn revenue for Burma's murderous military regime and cement its energy partnerships with neighbouring countries.

In recent months, regime leader Min Aung Hlaing has called for the stepping up of hydropower development in Shan State to address Burma's energy needs.

There are already ten large dams on Shan State's rivers, producing over half of Burma's total hydropower output. Several more are under construction, and another twenty planned, including three giant dams on the Salween for export of power to China and Thailand. These new dams are strongly opposed by local communities.

Members of Action for Shan State Rivers and its networks are posting slogans such as "Stop damming our rivers" and "Save our rivers" on banners and rocks along the Salween and other major rivers in Shan State.

"The rivers are our lifeblood which must be saved for future generations," said a community member from Tangyan township.

Since the military coup last year, the SAC regime has cracked down ruthlessly on civilians across the country. Over 1,600 people have been killed, and over 12,000 arrested. In recent weeks, deadly airstrikes against civilians have increased, including in the Salween basin in Karen State.

In response to the regime's atrocities, some foreign companies have suspended investments, including France's state-owned EDF, which halted its development of the Shweli 3 dam project in northern Shan State in March 2021.

However, the French company Razel-Bec is continuing construction of the controversial Upper Yeywa dam on the Namtu river in northern Shan State, amidst ongoing fighting and displacement. Razel-Bec is building the dam in a joint venture with IPG, a subsidiary of the IGE Group, which was sanctioned by the EU last month for its links to the regime.

Norway's Scatec has also recently revealed its intention to proceed with the Middle Yeywa dam in the conflict-torn Namtu river basin.

"We urge foreign companies to immediately pull out from all dam projects in Shan State," said Sai Kham Harn, a community leader from Hsipaw. "These dams only benefit the regime and fuel their atrocities against civilians."

### **Contact:**

Sai Hor Hseng            +66: 9-4728-6696        (Shan, English)

Nang Horm             +66: 6-1545-0655        (Thai)

Sai Zin                 +66: 6-2569-5220        (Burmese)