



SHAN

HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION

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Update by the Shan Human Rights Foundation

October 24, 2023

Pregnant woman injured, buildings damaged, over 1,000 displaced by SAC shelling along China trade corridor in Hsenwi township, northern Shan State

A pregnant woman was injured, buildings in three villages damaged, and over 1,000 villagers displaced by SAC shelling between October 5 and 9, 2023, during fighting against Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP) troops along the highway from Hsenwi to Chin Shwe Haw, one of Burma's main trade corridors to China.

In the morning of October 5, 2023, fighting broke out between SAC and KIA troops in Koon Kawk village, about seven miles east of Hsenwi town, along the Hsenwi-Chin Shwe Haw highway.

Later that day, at 1 pm, about 50 SAC troop reinforcements came in trucks along the highway from the direction of Hsenwi. They crossed the Namtu river into an SSPP-controlled area south of Pang Na village, causing fighting to break out with SSPP troops for about 30 minutes. That evening, the same SAC troops, stationed on the Namtu riverbank, fired shells into the surrounding jungle and hills, causing about 60 residents of Phai Kham village to flee their homes at about 7 pm to take refuge in Phai Kham temple.

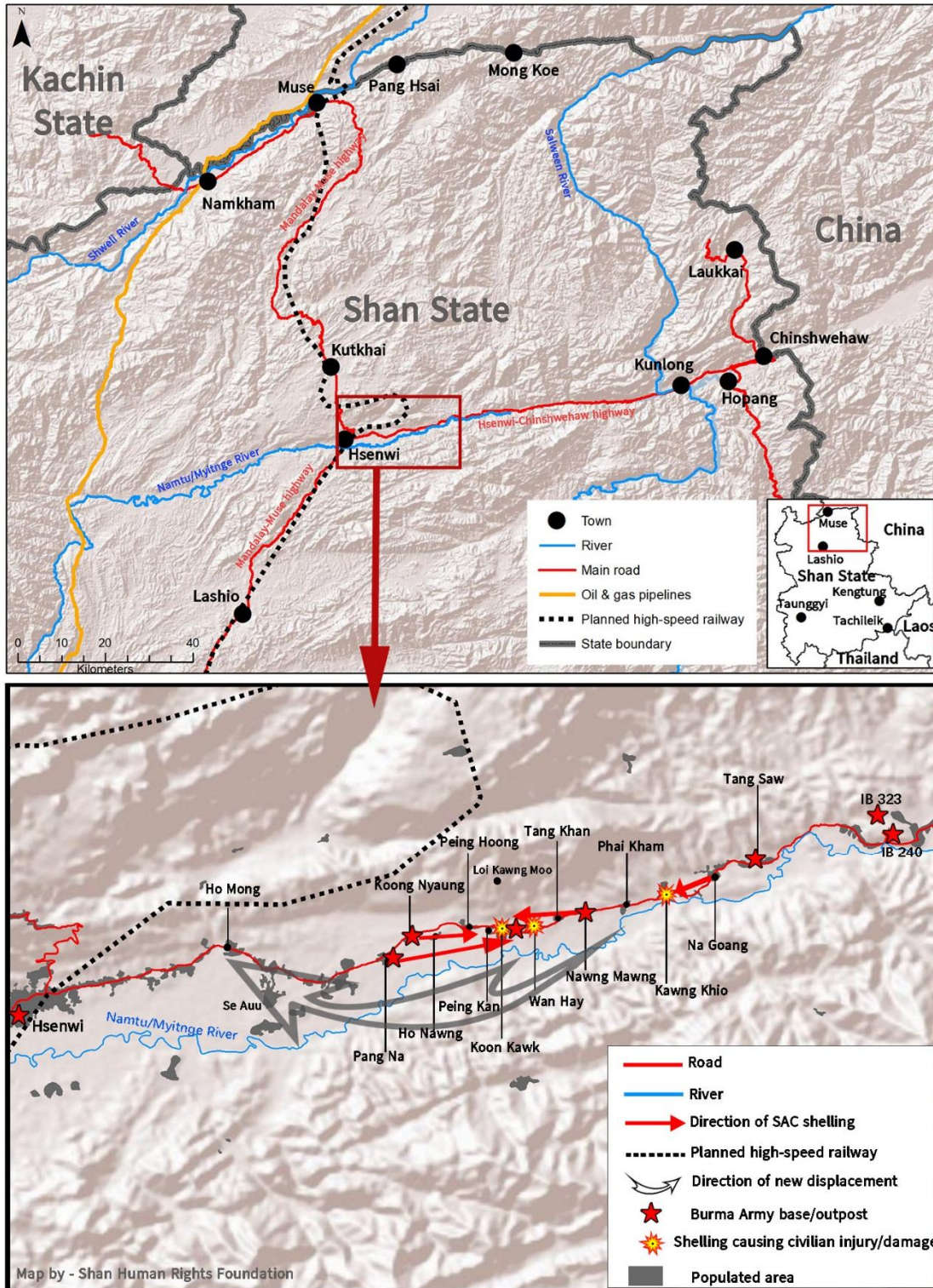
On October 7, at 10:30 am, shells from SAC IB 323 troops (under Hsenwi-based Military Operations Command #16) camped near Nawng Maung village hit Koon Kawk temple. At the same time, SAC troops stationed around Pang Na and Koong Nyaung villages indiscriminately fired shells in the direction of Koon Kawk village. One shell landed north of Koon Kawk temple, one in Koon Kawk village and another outside Koon Kawk village. A shell also landed in Peing Kang village, damaging a cowshed. Due to the shelling, about 10 novices and monks from Koon Kawk temple fled to Ho Mong temple, three miles east of Hsenwi, to take refuge. Hundreds of villagers living along the main road also fled to shelter in Ho Mong temple during this time.

On October 8, at around 11 am, SAC troops from IB 323 fought with KIA troops around Koon Kawk village. Shells landed in the village and in the local temple compound, damaging the temple pavilion roof and buildings where novices were staying.

On October 9, at 10:45 am, fighting broke out between SAC and KIA troops at Koon Kawk village. A shell fired by SAC troops staying at Na Goang village landed in Kawng Khio village, Koon Kawk village tract, injuring a 25-year-old pregnant woman. The shell exploded next to her house, causing shrapnel to hit her in the back while she was lying down at home. She was taken to Lashio

hospital for medical treatment. That afternoon, the SAC sent in troop reinforcements from ID 99, ID 88 and MOC #12 with two tanks to the fighting area. This caused about 100 Kawng Khio villagers to flee their homes to take refuge at Phai Kham temple.

SAC shelling causing civilian injury and damage in Hsenwi township, Oct 5-9, 2023



On October 10, from 1:30 pm to 2 pm, SAC troops encamped in Koon Kawk temple compound fired shells into the surrounding hills where KIA troops were staying.



SAC troops in Koon Kawk temple compound

On October 12, 2023, all the displaced villagers returned home, but SAC troops are still staying at Koon Kawk temple and at the hilltop pagoda north of Koon Kawk.

The Hsenwi-Chin Shwe Haw highway forms part of the first China-Burma “sea-road-rail link”, from Chengdu in Sichuan province to the Indian Ocean, under China’s Belt and Road Initiative. The section of the Chinese railway to Lincang, close to the Burma border, was opened in August 2021.

Over 1,000 villagers displaced by fighting and shelling

Over 1,000 villagers fled their homes between October 5 and 10, 2023. The majority took refuge in Ho Mong Temple as it is quite spacious, and easy for local communities to access and provide aid.

Villagers who took refuge in Ho Mong Temple			
No.	Village	Household	Population
1	Peing Kang	32	96
2	Koon Kawk	80	240

3	Peing Hoong	40	120
4	Wan Hay	57	171
5	Tang Khan	30	90
6	Nawng Mawng	30	90
7	Ho Nawng	17	52
8	Phai Kham	20	60
	TOTAL	306	919

Apart from this, several hundred villagers took refuge in other locations: Pang Na villagers fled to Jay Oo temple; Koong Nyaung villagers fled to stay with their relatives in Lashio, Kunlong and Ho Pang; while Kawng Khio villagers and some Phai Kham villagers fled to Phai Kham temple.



IDPs taking refuge at Ho Mong Temple

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