



KACHIN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION THAILAND

P.O.BOX 415, CHIANG MAI 50000, THAILAND

Date: August 21, 2017

Press release by KWAT

Latest Burma Army war crimes in Kachin State highlight urgent need to end military-to-military ties with Burma

On August 11, 2017, hundreds of Burma Army troops entered Kasung village, in Mogaung township of Kachin State, shooting indiscriminately at civilians. One villager was killed, at least two injured, and over 1,000 IDPs were forced to seek shelter in Namti and Lambraw Yang villages.

The attack was part of a new Burma Army operation to drive out Kachin troops from the hills north of Namti. Over 600 troops from three battalions, IB 29, LIB 381 and 384, have been deployed into the area since early August.

Displaced villagers described scenes of terror as women, children and elderly fled into the jungle to escape gunfire of the advancing troops, either trekking for miles to reach Namti, or hiding nearby until members of the Kachin Baptist Convention and Peace Creation Group from Myitkyina were able to rescue them on August 13.

Eleven villagers, including two women and three children, were arrested on August 11 and forced by the Burma Army to be guides through the jungle for three days and carry injured soldiers. Two of the arrested villagers were badly tortured.

On August 17, local Kamaing authorities blocked local aid groups from Hpakant from travelling to assist the IDPs in Namti. Two drivers were arrested, and a female aid volunteer was beaten by police and hospitalized.

KWAT deplors this blocking of humanitarian aid, and the Burma Army's latest violations against civilians, which meet the definition of war crimes.

KWAT reiterates our calls to the international community to put pressure on the Burma Army to stop their ongoing offensives and human rights violations, and to withdraw troops from ethnic areas. Specifically, KWAT calls for an end to all military-to-military ties with Burma, and for a visa ban on the leaders of the Burma Army.

“These latest attacks against civilians are part of a systematic military operation, authorized at the highest level,” said KWAT spokesperson, Shirley Seng. “Increasing military-to-military

cooperation is emboldening the Burma Army to commit war crimes. Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing should be ostracized internationally as a war criminal, not treated like a VIP.”

Contact persons:

Moon Nay Li (Thailand) +66 85 523 3791

San Htoi (Thailand) +66 939 621 908