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Situation update By the Shan Human Rights Foundation

Burmese government troops torch Ta'ang village in northern Shan State; farmer forced to guide troops shot dead in battle

In mid-November, 2015, Burmese government soldiers burned down half of the houses in an ethnic Ta'ang village in Namtu township, northern Shan State, in punishment for allegedly supporting an ethnic armed group. A displaced farmer forced to guide the Burmese troops was shot dead in battle.

On November 13, a group of about 150 Burma Army soldiers of Division 88 arrived from the direction of Lashio at the village of Pang Karng, 30 miles northeast of Namtu town. All of the over 170 residents of the village, except for the local Buddhist monk, had already fled to hide in the forest nearby, as they had heard that the Burma Army troops were on their way to attack the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) in their area.



Mai Aik La's ID card



Site where Mai Aik La was killed and cremated

When the Burmese troops arrived at the east of the village, they met a 37-year-old farmer called Mai Aik La, who had fled with his family, but had returned to his farm to try and rescue his only pig before the troops arrived. The troops arrested Mai Aik La and forced him to accompany them as a guide.



Villagers' makeshift bunker

The troops searched through the village, and began heading out to the west. When they arrived at the cemetery just outside the village, at around 5 pm in the evening, a fierce battle broke out with TNLA troops. Shells were fired by the Burma Army, including at the village, causing the temple to be damaged. Fortunately, the local monk had taken shelter in a makeshift bunker near the temple, and was not injured.

After the fighting died down, the Burmese troops stationed themselves in and around the village, occupying a disused Burma Army camp near the temple. On November 14, they began setting fire to the houses in

the village. They told the monk they wanted to punish the villagers for supporting the TNLA. The monk begged them not to burn down all the houses. That day, they burned down 14 of the 35 houses in the village, including the house of the village headman, Loong Jarm. Property, including rice and corn stores, and six motorcycles were burned together with the houses.



Section of Pang Karng village burned down by Burma Army



House of the village headman, Loong Jarm burned down by Burma Army

On November 15, there was further heavy fighting between the TNLA and the Burma Army troops near the village.

The government troops remained in the village for a further two weeks until November 29. On the day they left, at 4:00 am, they set fire to another house in the village, where a large amount of rice was being stored.

During this time, the villagers had not dared return to Pang Karng. Only on December 4, when they were sure that the soldiers had left the area, some villagers returned to check on what was left of their property. They found the body of Sai La with bullet wounds in the cemetery, near the remains of bodies of four Burmese soldiers. They assumed he was killed during the fighting that took place in that location on November 13. The villagers cremated his body after finding him.

Even though the Burmese troops have now left Pang Karng, the villagers do not want to return to live in the same ill-fated location. Since December 8, they have started rebuilding their village in a new location, about one mile away.



Pang Karng villagers' temporary IDP shelter

Mai Aik La is survived by his wife and two children: a three-year old son and a one-year-old daughter.

The death of Mai Aik La is a direct result of the Burma Army's continued practice of forcing civilians to accompany them on military operations, whether as guides, porters or human shields. SHRF calls for pressure on the Burma Army to immediately end this practice, as well as to stop its ongoing scorched earth tactics against ethnic communities, involving deliberate destruction of housing, property and food stocks.

List of families displaced from Pang Karng village, Namtu township since mid-November 2015

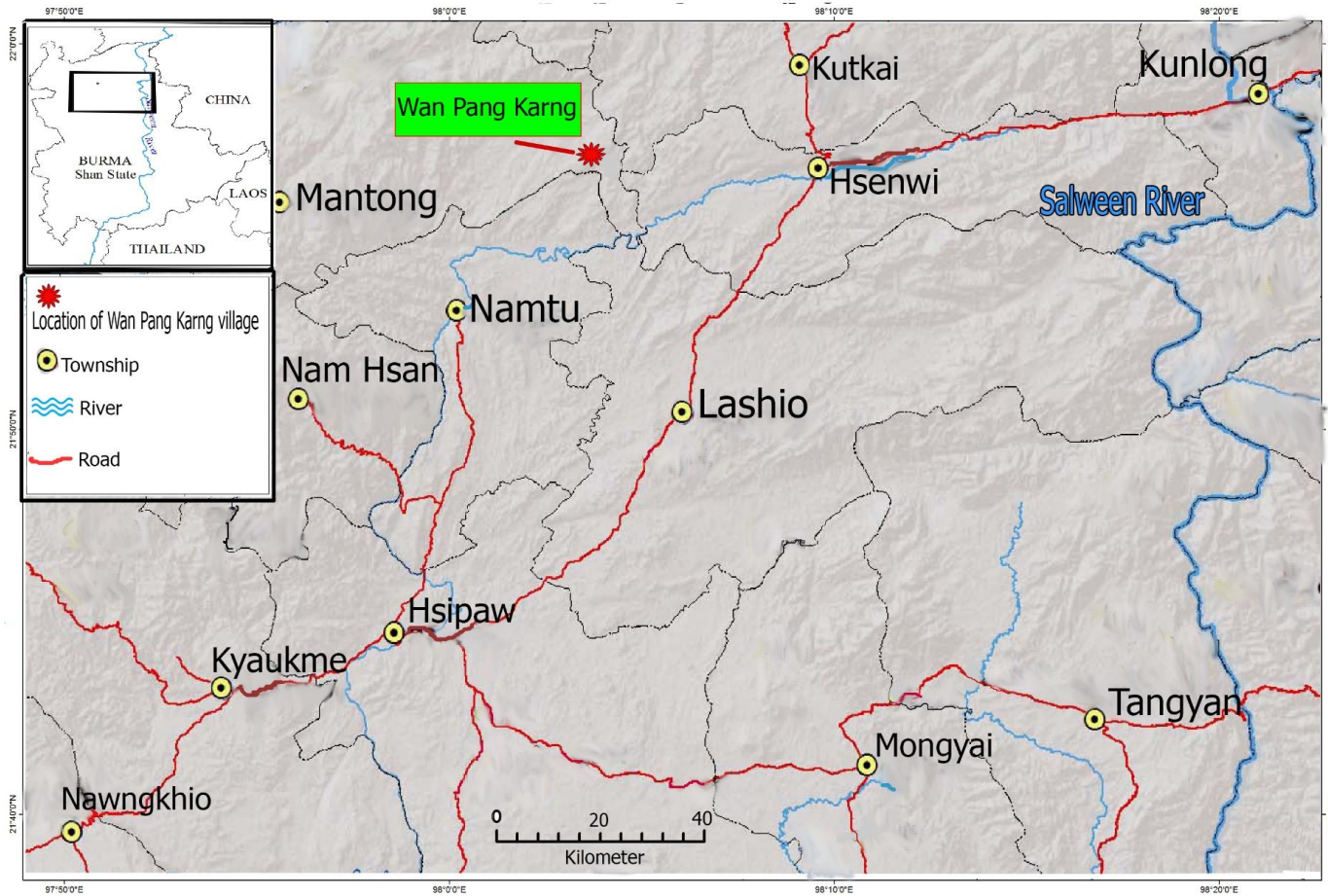
No.	Name of household head	No. of people in household
1.	Kun Aik La	8
2.	Kun Nai Nyi	4
3.	Aik Nyam Hla	3
4.	Yar Mar Marn	4
5.	Mar Marn Ei	2
6.	Mar Kit	2
7.	Yar O	2
8.	Aik Ngo	4

9.	Aik Nyarm Tae	4
10.	Ta Hsar	2
11.	Mar Aik Oo	3
12.	Ta Leim Tawng	9
13.	Ta Maik Te	4
14.	Ta Kun Kya	6
15.	Ta Kun Aye	9
16.	Ta Kun Nyam Aung	5
17.	Yar Sar	5
18.	Yar Mar Maung	11
19.	Ta Kun Kham	10
20.	Ta Kun Win	5
21.	Ta Yae Shwe	6

22.	Aik Nyarm Te	3
23.	Aik Nyarm Mai	6
24.	Ta Aik Shwe	7
25.	Aik Nai Marn Yaung	7
26.	Mar Aik Phone	2
27.	Ta Kun Khaung	3
28.	Ta Kun Kyan	6
29.	Aye Kya	4
30.	Yar Ai Mar Aung	6
31.	Aik Ei	6
32.	Ta Aik Yeik	7
33.	Ta Kun La	9
Total		174 people*

Note: The list contains information about only 33 of the 35 houses in the village. The actual number of displaced is higher than this.

Location of Ta'ang village torched by Burma Army troops in November 2015



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