

ASSR fully supports demands of Ta Long villagers to halt Upper Yeywa dam

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Following the visit by eleven MPs to Ta Long village, Hsipaw township, on August 11, 2018, the Ta Long villagers are today sending a letter to 23 parliamentary committees of the Amyotha Hludaw (Upper House) and Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) in Naypyidaw, urging a halt to the Upper Yeywa dam project on the Namtu/Myitnge river, which will flood their village of over 600 residents, as well as farmlands, schools, temples and stupas.

The letter states that the project has lacked transparency from the outset. Ta Long villagers were never consulted before dam construction began in 2008. They were only informed in 2014 that they would have to be resettled, and strongly opposed this.

Since then, the Ta Long villagers have repeatedly submitted appeals against the dam to MPs of the State and National Parliaments, both under the previous government of President Thein Sein and the current NLD government. However, their appeals have gone unheeded.

Action for Shan State Rivers fully supports the Ta Long villagers' demands for the halt of the Upper Yeywa dam project, which would destroy their ancestral homes, farmlands and renowned orange orchards.

"The government should not proceed with a dam so strongly opposed by local people. It will only fuel conflict in Shan State," said Khur Hseng, a spokesperson of the Action for Shan State Rivers.

The recent dam disaster in Laos, which caused scores of deaths and evacuation of thousands of villagers, has instilled fear of possible dam breakage among communities along the Namtu. The feasibility study for the ill-fated Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam project was carried out by the Swedish firm AF Consult, the same group which designed the Yeywa dam, the only existing dam on the Namtu, completed in 2011.

The Upper Yeywa dam is the most advanced of four planned dam projects on the Namtu. The Upper Yeywa dam is situated in Kyaukme township, northern Shan State, and involves companies from China, Switzerland, Germany, and Japan.

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