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Update by the Shan Human Rights Foundation

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Burma Army ground and aerial attack to seize strategic mountain in N. Shan State kills one villager, injures two, and displaces 700

During March 9-10, 2019, an attack by over 400 Burma Army troops and two helicopter gunships against a strategic post of the Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA) on Pang Kha mountain, southern Hsipaw township, caused the death of an elderly villager, injured two other elderly villagers, and displaced about 700 villagers.

The 67-year-old villager was killed by a landmine on March 9, when forced by the Burma Army to deliver a letter to the SSPP/SSA camp. Another 50-year-old villager was injured by the same blast. On March 10, a 50-year-old woman was injured when a rocket fired from a helicopter hit the house she was cooking in.

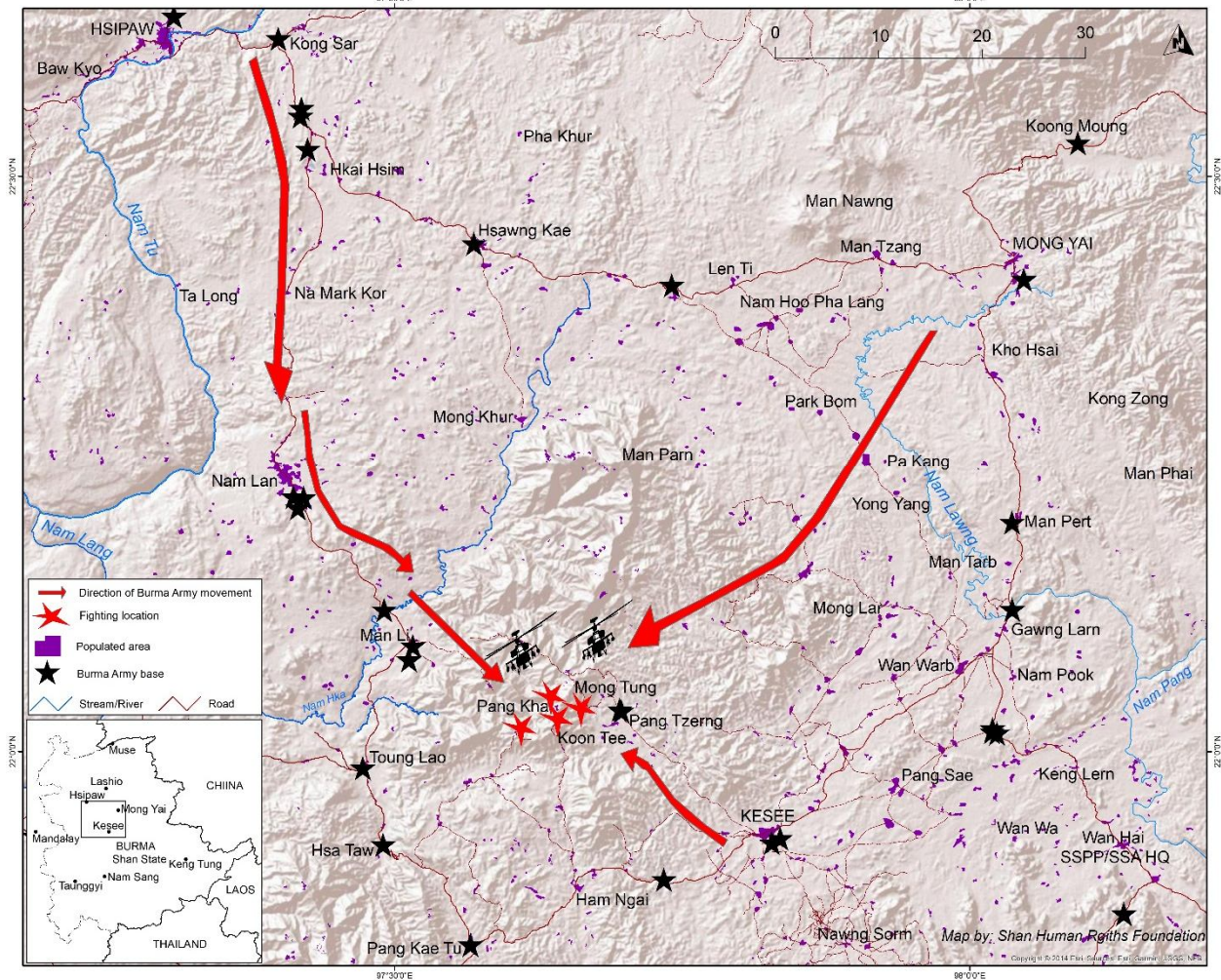
The attack caused the inhabitants of Pang Kha village, and nine nearby villages in Mong Tung village tract – altogether about 700 people - to flee in terror to Ke See town, where they sheltered in two local temples for about a week.

Pang Kha mountain is very high, and overlooks Hsipaw, Ke See and Mong Kung townships. The operation to seize the mountain was clearly ordered from the highest levels, as it involved at least four Burma Army battalions as well as the Air Force.

The attack took place despite the Burma Army's declaration of a 4-month unilateral ceasefire on December 21, 2018, in five regional commands, including all four commands in Shan State.

The attack occurred only two weeks after a meeting on February 25 between the Burma Army's negotiation team led by Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and the SSPP/SSA in Naypyidaw, where they agreed to have further talks every month for trust building.

Burma Army attack against SSPP/SSA in southern Hsipaw township, March 2019



Details of human rights violations

1. One elderly villager killed, one injured by land-mine when forced to deliver letter by Burma Army

The Burma Army troops, from Hsipaw-based IB 23, Man Li-based LIB 17, Mong Yai-based LIB 325 and Ho Ya-based IB 67, came from different directions to launch the attack against the SSPP/SSA at Pang Kha.

On March 8, 2019, about 80 Burma Army troops travelled from Ke See on four Chinese-made trucks and arrived at the village of Wan Koon Dee, which has 32 households, east of Pang Kha.

On March 9, at 4 am, these Burma Army troops ordered two elderly villagers in Wan Koon Dee to deliver a letter to the SSPP/SSA base on Pang Kha mountain: Loong Sa, aged 67, from Wan Koon Dee, and Loong Maung, aged 50, from Pang Kha village.

As the two villagers were on the way to deliver the letter, they stepped on a land mine, which killed Loong Sa instantly, and injured Loong Maung, in the leg and buttocks. Loong Maung managed to make his way back to Wan Koon Dee, and was taken for treatment at Ke See hospital.

At the sound of the landmine explosion, the Burma Army troops advanced and began shooting at the SSPP/SSA base on Loi Pang Kha mountain

Loong Sa was married to Pa Jarm, with three daughters.



Loong Maung

Helicopter fires rocket at civilian target, injuring one woman, destroying one house

On March 10, at about 5 pm, two Burma Army helicopters arrived at Loi Pang Kha from the direction of the Nam Zarng air-base.

The helicopters began shooting rockets over the village of Pang Kha, which has 37 houses. One rocket hit the house of Loong Jarm Hseng, where a 50-year old woman called Nai Jang was cooking. She was hit by shrapnel in the left side of her chest.

Loong Jarm Hseng, who was outside the house, managed to pull Nai Jang from the house, which went up in flames. Nai Jang was taken for treatment at Kesse hospital.



Nai Jang

Terrified by the air attack, the inhabitants of Pang Kha village and nine nearby villages in Mong Tung village tract - Wan Pang Tab, Wan Koon Nim, Wan Koon Kha, Wan Maw, Wan Koon Dee, Nai Weing, Wan Hom, Wan Pang Gwai, and Wan Pang Jerng - altogether about 700 villagers, fled to the town of Ke See, where they took shelter in two temples: Wat Kawng Oot temple and Wat Loi Paw temple. Most returned to their homes on March 16, after the fighting had died down, except for the villagers of Pang Kha, who still do not dare go home.

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