

Statement by Shan community groups

June 16, 2020

Still waiting for justice: remembering the Hsai Khao and Tad Fa Ho massacres

We, Shan community groups, are today making merit at local temples in remembrance of the 56 villagers massacred by the Burma Army in Kunhing township 23 years ago, the largest single-day killing during the Burma Army's brutal "clearance operations" in central and southern Shan State in 1996-1998.

On June 16, 1997, 56 men, women and children were executed by the Burma Army in two locations in southern Kunhing. They had been forcibly relocated to the town the previous month, and permitted to return by ox-cart to collect rice from their old villages along the Pang River. On the way, they were arrested and shot dead by Burma Army troops, acting on coordinated orders: 29 villagers were killed by troops of IB 246 at Hsai Khao, and 27 were killed near Tard Fah Ho waterfall by troops of LIB 513. The bodies were just left in the open to rot.

To this day, there has been no justice for these massacres, nor for the torture, rape and killing of hundreds of other civilians by the Burma Army during their 1996-1998 clearance operations, which uprooted over 400,000 people in 15 townships.

This is why over 100 villages in southern Kunhing remain deserted till today. Their former inhabitants, who fled to Thailand over 20 years ago, dare not return while the Burma Army remains in their land, with an ongoing licence to torture, rape and kill with impunity.

These tens of thousands of former Kunhing inhabitants were not counted in the 2014 census, had no right to vote in the 2010 and 2015 elections, and will be likewise disenfranchised in this year's elections.

The expulsion and disenfranchisement of local populations is a key strategy of the Naypyidaw government to occupy and exploit the resource-rich ethnic lands, enabling them to push ahead with damaging megaprojects such as the giant Mong Ton dam on the Salween river -- whose reservoir will submerge the original villages of those massacred in June 1997.

The Mong Ton dam is a joint investment of Chinese and Thai state-owned companies, planned for export of power. Until today, Burma Army troops are continuing to patrol around the dam-site, committing abuses against local civilians.

We demand that foreign governments and corporations stop turning a blind eye to the past and present crimes of Burma Army troops securing their investments, and end "business as usual" with the Burmese government until their military is held to account, and there is a new federal constitution ensuring rights and safety for indigenous communities driven at gunpoint from their lands.

1. Shan Human Rights Foundation
2. Shan State Farmers' Network
3. Shan Sapawa Environmental Organization
4. Shan Women's Action Network
5. Lin Mork Mai
6. Shan National Organization (Thailand)
7. Toom Toan Tai

8. Shan Refugee Organization (Malaysia)
9. Yawnghwe Office in Exile
10. Shan State Refugee Committee (Thai border)
11. Kong Moong Murng IDP Camp Committee
12. Loi Tai Laeng IDP Camp Committee
13. Loi Lam IDP Camp Committee
14. Koung Jor Refugee Camp Committee
15. Loi Sam Sip IDP Camp Committee
16. Loi Kaw Wan IDP Camp Committee
17. Kunhing villagers in Thailand:
 - Ho Yarn villagers (Ho Yarn village tract, Kunhing township)
 - Na Hla villagers (Ho Yarn village tract, Kunhing township)
 - Woh Long villagers (Ho Yarn village tract, Kunhing township)
 - Nam Poon villagers (Ho Yarn village tract, Kunhing township)
 - Na Koon villagers (Ho Yarn village tract, Kunhing township)
 - Ho Na villagers (Ho Yarn village tract, Kunhing township)
 - Keng Kham villagers (Keng Kham village tract, Kunhing township)
 - Hsai Khao villagers (Hsai Khao village tract, Kunhing township)

Details of the Hsai Khao and Tad Fa Ho massacres can be seen in the following 1998 SHRF report:

[Dispossessed](#)

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