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Press release by Shan Community Based Organisations

Northern Shan farmers call for Chinese pipelines to be removed from their lands

Northern Shan farmers are submitting demands to Burma's government today for China's giant oil and gas pipelines to be removed from their lands immediately, citing rights abuses, poor construction and safety fears.

Representatives of the 10,000 strong Northern Shan Farmers' Committee are today delivering their demands to the Shan State Parliament in Taunggyi, urging the removal of the trans-Burma pipelines before they become operational next month.

A third of the 800-kilometer pipelines cross northern Shan State, through almost 2,000 acres of forests and farmlands. Since 2011, vast tracts of rice fields and orchards have been bulldozed, with soil dumping and water blockage causing crop damage far beyond the 100-foot wide pipeline corridor. Villages had their water sources cut off, while construction vehicles damaged roads and caused fatal accidents.

Shan farmers from six townships have been forced into accepting unfair and unequal amounts of compensation. Farmers in Hsipaw received only a quarter of the compensation given to those in Namkham for their rice fields.

Farmers fear that poor construction and local soil hazards, such as corrosive underground salt deposits in Hsipaw, will cause deadly leaks and explosions near their homes. Holes already appearing in the pipelines have been fixed with flimsy rubber patches, unlikely to withstand the pressure of billions of cubic meters of gas and oil. No information about safety risks has been given to local communities.

"We feel like a time-bomb has been placed under our homes," said Nang Mwe Hseng from Namkham. "Not only have our lands been taken without our consent, but our lives are now under threat."

Fighting between the Burma Army and Kachin, Ta-ang and Shan resistance troops continues along the pipelines in northern Shan State, and villagers fear increased militarization and rights abuses by Burmese troops once the gas and oil start flowing.

The pipelines, which will bring gas from the Bay of Bengal and oil from the Middle East to Yunnan, are a joint venture between the state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE). Burma's government will earn an estimated US\$ 29 billion from sale of gas to China over 30 years.

A new report "*Shan farmers oppose the Shwe pipelines*" can be viewed on www.shanhumanrights.org

Shan CBOs include the Shan Human Rights Foundation, Shan Women's Action Network, Shan Youth Power, Shan Sapawa Environmental Organisation, Shan State Organisation, Shan State Development Foundation, and Shan Youth Network Group. They will deliver the northern Shan farmers' demands to the Chinese consulate in Chiang Mai today.

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