



Update by the Shan Human Rights Foundation

June 5, 2014

Ongoing attacks by Burma Army against civilians during operations to control strategic border area near Namkham (April 10-June 2 2014)

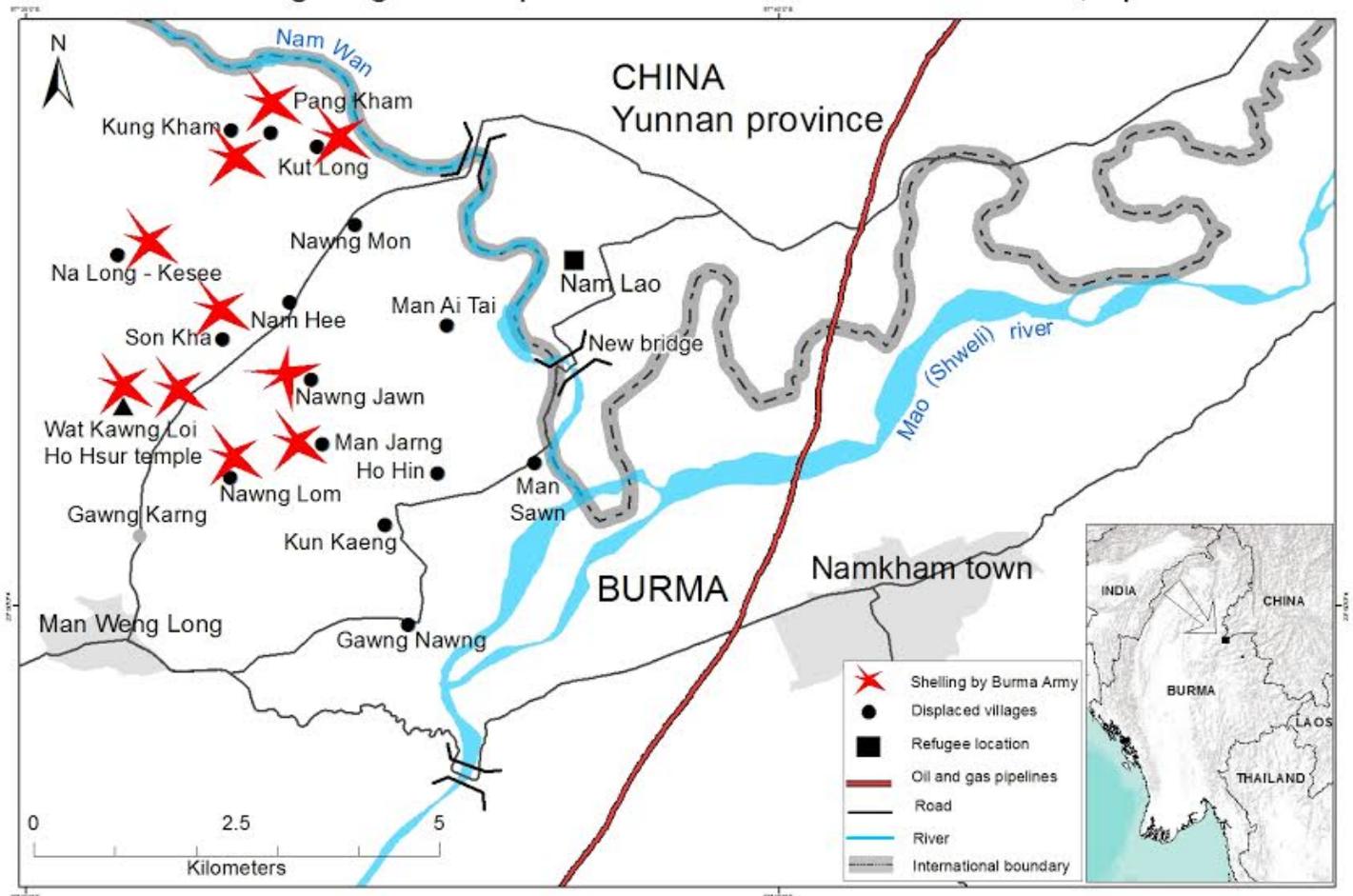
On April 10, 2014, the Burma Army launched a large-scale offensive against Kachin Independence Army (KIA) positions on the Kachin-Shan State border, close to China. Deploying over 1,000 troops, they fired hundreds of shells to drive out the KIA, in the populated Shan farming area of Tung Loi Ho Hsur west of Namkham. The shelling caused civilian injury, and damaged temples, houses, vehicles and other property. The Burma Army troops also entered villages, looted food and livestock, and set fire to farmers' crops, causing well over 1,000 Shan villagers from about 15 villages to flee to neighbouring towns in northern Shan State, as well as into China.

Most of the Shan villagers returned to their homes after about a week, but have since faced heightened security measures by the Burma Army, who have now seized control of the profitable border trade in this area. The main border crossing at Pang Kham is being expanded, with a large highway being built on the Chinese side of the border. A new bridge is also being built at another border crossing closer to Namkham. The illegal export of timber to China has now resumed after the recent fighting.

Since the April offensive, military security around Namkham has been tightened, with several incidents of Burmese troops shooting at innocent civilians. Five villagers have been shot and injured by soldiers guarding the Chinese gas pipeline west of Namkham, and last week a woman was shot and killed when riding a motorbike past a security checkpoint east of Namkham.

The Shan Human Rights Foundation strongly denounces these military operations by the Burma Army, which are fuelling conflict and endangering the lives of local civilians.

Location of fighting and displacement on Burma-China border, April 2014



Details of human rights abuses by Burma Army, in chronological order (April 10-June 2, 2014)

April 10, 2014

Shelling and looting of Shan villages, causing over 1,000 villagers to flee

Over 1,000 Burma Army troops, from Light Infantry Division 88, advanced north from their base at Man Weng Long (Man Wing Gyi), in Mansi township, and began firing mortars from their base at Gawng Kharng towards the KIA, based near Pang Kham at the China border. Over 100 shells were fired from 8.30 am to 7 pm. Shells landed in villages as follows:

1. Man Jarnng
2. Nawng Jawn
3. Son Kha
4. Na Long
5. Kut Long
6. Kung Kham
7. Pang Kham
8. Nawng Lom
9. Man Sawng

As a result, over 1,000 Shan villagers from about 15 villages in the Tung Loi Ho Hsur area fled to the China border and to the town of Namkham in northern Shan State. These villages included:

1. Man Jarng
2. Ho Hin
3. Gawng Nawng
4. Kun Kaeng
5. Man Sawn
6. Man Ai Tai
7. Nam Hee
8. Son Kha
9. Na Long
10. Nawng Mon
11. Kut Long
12. Kung Kham
13. Pang Kham
14. Nawng Jawn
15. Nawng Lom



Shan villagers fleeing to China

At 8.20 pm, Burmese troops entered the village of Nawng Lom and looted villagers' property and livestock, including

1. A video camera and clothing belonging to Sai Ann
2. 3 chickens belonging to Sai Yi Moan
3. 2 chickens belonging to King Hseng Yord Hoeng
4. A large amount of dried food belonging to Sai Ai Leng

April 11, 2014

Shelling of temple and villages, injuring villager; looting and burning of villagers' property

Burmese troops continued firing over 100 shells (120 mm) at the hill area around the temple of Wat Kawng Loi Ho Hsur, damaging the Buddhist altar inside. Shells landed in Nawng Lom village, destroying the house, belongings and truck of Sai Ai Than, as well as the belongings of his neighbor.

Burmese troops also fired about 10 shells from Nawng Lom towards Nawng Jawn, damaging the house and belongings of an elderly woman, Nai Mawk Hur Ai. Shrapnel from a mortar shell also hit the leg of Sai Sit, aged 30, who was taken to a hospital in China for treatment.

At 9.30 am, Burmese troops also burned down a sugar cane field belonging to Sai Hla Woon of Man Nawng Lom village.

They also looted livestock and alcohol from villagers in Na Long, including:

1. 3 chickens belonging to Lung Sai Sarm
2. 1 chicken belonging to Nai Hseng Hwar
3. 1 chicken belonging to Nai Mawk Kham Thin



Exploded mortar shell collected from Man Nawng Jawn

April 12, 2014

Looting of Buddhist temple, arbitrary arrest of villagers

Burmese troops advanced to the temple of Wat Kawng Loi Ho Hsur, broke down the door of the temple, and looted food offerings from local people which were stored there.

Two elderly villagers from Pang Kham went to the Wat Kawng Loi Ho Hsur temple to inspect the damage, and on the way back, they were arrested and questioned by Burmese troops.

April 20-29, 2014

Checking villagers' mobile phones for pictures of soldiers

Burmese troops set up checkpoints along the road between Muse, Namkham and Man Weng Long. They checked the mobile phones of those travelling along the road to see if there were photos of soldiers or fighting. If they found any, they took away the sim cards of the phones. They also took out the batteries from some phones so that they could not take photographs.

April 25, 2014

Pressuring Shan villagers to force out Kachin IDPs

Burmese troops summoned the headman and community leaders from Nam Hee village (where the Kachin IDP camp of Lagat Yang was located), and said to them: "If you don't want the Kachin IDPs staying in your village, you can write a letter to us asking for them to be moved. If you do this, we can burn down the camp, and they move within a few hours." However, the village leaders did not agree to this.

April 25, 2014

Four charcoal sellers injured by shelling and gunfire near Chinese pipeline

At 4.30 am, in Loi Kap, near Kung Kad village, about 6 miles southwest of Namkham, about half a mile from the Chinese pipeline, a group of six villagers were transporting charcoal by truck from the forest to Namkham. They had stopped to rest by the side of the road at Loi Kap. There was a roadside shop nearby, where some Burmese soldiers in civilian clothes, were guarding the road.

Suddenly, another group of Burmese soldiers on a nearby hill top fired a shell and also fired guns at the truck. Four villagers were seriously hurt and had to be sent to Namkham hospital, as follows:

1. Mai Aik Yaing, aged 20, from Man Lone village, Mong Wee township, injured in his calf
2. Sai Aik Kun, aged 25, from Mong Wee, injured in his thigh
3. Sai Aik Kam, aged 30, Bein Kan village, injured in his thigh
4. U Yaw Htun, aged 35, from Mong Wee, who was injured in his head, spine and legs. He had to be sent hospital in China for specialized treatment.

Also, one Burma Army soldier, who had been guarding the road, was shot in the head. His name was Aung Bo Bo, aged 27, of Karen ethnicity.

May 7, 2014

Burmese soldiers guarding Chinese pipeline throw grenade at villager

At 14.30 hrs, Burmese troops were guarding the Chinese pipeline near the road between Aung Myitta and Kun Long, west of Namkham. They threw a grenade, which exploded, hitting a local villager from Aung Myitta called Aung Nyunt, 52 years old, who was on his way to his fields. He was badly injured and had to be sent to Muse Hospital.

May 9, 2014

Villager injured by shells fired near Pang Kham

Two shells and guns were fired near Pang Kham, injuring a villager named Sai Ai Kon, aged 20. This has made local people afraid to go into the forest near the village.

May 29, 2014

Woman shot dead by Burmese troops near Namkham

A woman died after she and her husband, who were riding a motorcycle, were shot at by Burmese soldiers from Light Infantry Division 88, at a checkpoint near Namkham on May 29, 2014.

The incident happened when the couple, from Nam Jarng village, Namkham township, were driving through Kong Vein village. Burmese soldiers threw a grenade and shot at them, injuring both of them seriously. The wife, A Htay, died from her injuries on May 30.



A Htay, who was killed by Burmese soldiers when riding a motorcycle near Namkham, on May 29, 2014

June 2, 2014

Shells fired in hills east of Namkham, preventing villagers from farming

At 11 am, Burmese troops fired M79 rocket launchers four times in the hills about two miles east of Namkham, causing the villagers in that area to be afraid to go to their fields or into the forest to collect firewood.

On the same day, three trucks carrying about 70-80 Burmese soldiers left Namkham to provide security for the gas pipeline between Namkham and Mong Wee.

Villagers' opinions on the April attacks (interviewed in May 2014)

A villager from Na Hee said: "The Burmese authorities said they would take a census of the people in this area, but the KIA said they would not allow this. Then the Burmese commander of Division 88 gave us a letter to send to the KIA commander (at Pang Kham) saying that if the KIO/KIA did not let the census team enter this area, they would advance anyway. We took the letter to KIA. They said they would consult their superiors. Then the KIA replied (to the Burmese commander) that they would allow the census, but not in their area. They said the census should be taken at Man Weng, which is the area under Burmese government control. We think the reason for the fighting is because the Burmese want to occupy this area for their business. There is a big highway being built on the Chinese side of the border (from Pang Kham)."

A villager from Pang Kham said that the Burmese troops were encouraging them to form a local Shan militia, but up till now they had not agreed.



Logs being transported from Burma into China after the Burmese troops had taken control of the Pang Kham border area