



Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust



“On the ground, the Army is taking advantage of the silence of the international community.”

Visit Report | Thai-Burma Borderland

May 2015



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Cover photo: An IDP looks out over Loi Kaw Wan IDP camp

ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|---|
| ARV | Antiretroviral drugs |
| CBO | Community-Based Organisation |
| CHW | Community Health Worker |
| DfID | Department for International Development (British Government) |
| FBR | Free Burma Rangers |
| IDP | Internally Displaced Persons |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organisation |
| IRC | International Rescue Committee |
| KHD | Karenni Health Department |
| KIA | Kachin Independence Army |
| KIO | Kachin Independence Organisation |
| KWAT | Kachin Women's Association Thailand |
| MNDAA | Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army |
| NCA | National Ceasefire Agreement |
| NCCT | Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| SHRF | Shan Human Rights Foundation |
| SWAN | Shan Women's Action Network |
| SSDF | Shan State Development Fund |
| SSA | Shan State Army |
| SSA-S | Shan State Army - South |
| TBA | Traditional Birth Attendant |
| TBC | The Border Consortium |
| THB | Thai Baht |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UWPC | Union Peace-Making Work Committee |
| UWSA | United Wa State Army |
| WHP | SWAN's Community Health and Maternal and Child Health Education and Service Delivery Programme (acronym stands from previous project title) |
| WLB | Women's League of Burma |

1. INTRODUCTION

There have been widely reported reforms in Burma since the establishment of a quasi-civilian elected Government in 2010, including the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest. However, the Burmese Army remains highly powerful and the ongoing persecution and forced relocation of large groups of ethnic national people persist. 40-60% of the population of Burma is made up of non-Burman ethnic national groups, such as the Shan, Kachin, Rohingya and others. We have deep concerns for the lack of meaningful representation of the ethnic national people in the political system, which allows for human rights abuses to be committed against them with impunity. This report outlines the current challenges that these people face, and urges the international community to see beyond the guise of democratic reform in Burma.

HART staff have visited Burma twice in the past three months: the first a visit to Chin State and the second to the ethnic national peoples in eastern Burma.

During our first visit, we saw generally positive developments in several areas across Chin State, including greatly improved relations between the military and police forces with civilians, the cessation of forced labour and investment in infrastructure (full report available [here](#)).

On this visit, we met representatives of the Shan, Kachin and Karenni people and visited a camp for Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Shan State. Their stories revealed a very different picture.

There are consistent and deeply disturbing reports of the continuing military offensives and atrocities committed by the Burmese Army in Kachin and northern Shan States, especially against the Kokang people. A particularly serious development is the reported use of increasingly heavy and high calibre artillery and mortar, helicopter gunships and fighter jet aircraft by the Burmese Army. Furthermore, the Army use ceasefires to advance their position deeper into the ethnic people's territory and to enhance military capability.

Another cause for deep concern is continuing expropriation of land and ruthless exploitation of the natural resources with derisory or no compensation which has involved forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. A continuing aspect with far-reaching implications is the building of dams which not only drive many people from their homes in the immediate vicinity but have devastating effects for people much further away in the delta areas affected by the drastic changes to the flow of the rivers.

An additional troubling development is the changing policies of international aid

organisations. As the Burmese Government has managed to improve its image with foreign governments and other key players in the international community, donor bodies, including the British Government's Department for International Development (DfID), now give most of their funds for aid programmes to agencies working officially with the Burmese Government rather than directly to local organisations serving their own people in the ethnic conflict areas. This is depriving excellent NGOs, such as Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN), of much-needed resources for their fundamentally important work providing health care and education for civilians in parts of Shan State, where there is no other provision of essential services. Other organisations providing cross-border aid have also been severely affected by this change of policy with very serious implications for civilians in these parts of Burma.

Therefore, we regretfully report these deep concerns of the ethnic national peoples who have to witness the continuing suffering of their people as victims of war, Army-inflicted atrocities, the theft of their land and resources and the anguish of displacement from their homes.

The ethnic national people also fear that the current "Peace Process," which is the focus of so much of the international community's commitment, is a betrayal of their current situation and of their aspirations for their future.

We hope that the international community will respond more appropriately, calling the Burmese Government to account for the Burmese Army's escalating military offensives and atrocities, perpetrated without consequence; and for its encouragement of unscrupulous investment which is ruthlessly stealing land and resources from the Shan, Kachin and other ethnic national peoples.

1.1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key findings:

- The Burmese army uses ceasefires to extend its bases and escalate its military supply routes, and subsequently to renew military offensives. At present, fighting is rife in in the Kokang self-administered region of Shan State, other areas of northern Shan State and Kachin State.
- Atrocities perpetrated by the Burmese Army continue with impunity.
- Expropriation of land, exploitation of natural resources and forced displacement continue unabated.
- The ethnic national peoples lack confidence in the Peace Process and fear that the next election will not bring them stability and security: *"Peace is only on the Government side's terms. One side cannot make peace. There must be discussion between the Government, ethnic armed groups and political parties. There is no evidence of change for the people on the ground."*
- Many aid organisations which have previously provided life-saving cross-border aid to ethnic national people have diverted their funds to official recipients working with the Burmese Government's authorization in Rangoon and Naypyidaw. This leaves small NGOs and community based organisations (CBOs) seriously deprived of funds to help civilians in areas unreached by these larger organizations.

HART finds that there is an urgent need for the international community to:

- Adopt a more balanced view of the overall situation in Burma, the democratic transition and the so called Peace Process in order to include representation of the ethnic national peoples. We were told that, *"It is very rare to have people asking about what is happening on the ground. No one is interested; they only care about the peace process"*.
- To call the Burmese Government into account for allowing the Burmese Army to perpetrate atrocities with impunity, and investors to expropriate land ruthlessly.
- To reconsider the policies that are driving the diversion of funds away from organisations providing cross-border aid.

We urge the Burmese Government to ensure that ethnic nationals have full and fair participation in the peace process with serious consideration of their desire to move towards a federal government.

1.1. VISIT OBJECTIVES

Aid

- a) To discuss with HART's partners their priorities for aid, as a basis for fundraising and ensuring the most appropriate use of funds.
- b) To obtain evidence of the use of funds previously provided by HART, supplementing monitoring reports and accounts provided by partners, and to enhance accountability to donors.
- c) To ascertain the availability and adequacy of aid for the populations in the areas visited, and to identify priorities for future aid.

Advocacy

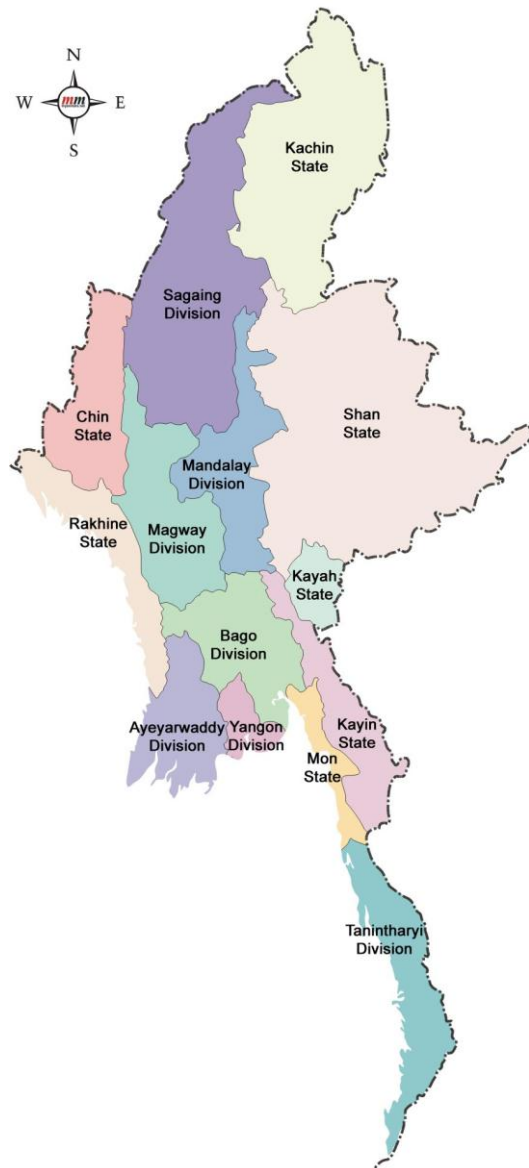
- a) To obtain up-to-date information and first-hand accounts of the situation in Burma, with a particular focus on continued fighting and human rights violations, the political and humanitarian situations, and the challenges faced by migrants forced to flee into exile in Thailand;
- b) To discuss with representatives of the ethnic national communities their concerns and priorities for support, and to record their messages for members of the international community.

1.2. TERMINOLOGY

Except where the name Myanmar is used in official titles, the name Burma has been used throughout the report, as it is preferred by the peoples of Burma with whom HART works.

1.3. QUOTATIONS

All quotations in this report have been placed in *italics*. Where necessary, quotations have been anonymised to protect identity.



Right: Map of Burma showing State boundaries

2. FINDINGS

The HART delegation had meetings with our partner's Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) and Doh Say, an individual who works primarily in Karen and Karenni States. In addition, we met with representatives from Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT), Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF), Burma Relief Centre (BRC) and the Community Committee at Loi Kaw Wan IDP camp inside Shan State. They provided up-to-date information and highlighted their concerns.

2.1. MILITARY OFFENSIVES

Despite ceasefires signed in many ethnic national areas and the ongoing 'peace process', conflict continues to rage in northern Shan State and Kachin State.

The area of particular concern at present is the Kokang Region in north-eastern Shan State, where intense fighting broke out on 9th February 2015. Meetings with community leaders revealed that there are currently 40 army units based in Kokang, indicating a concentration of military strength in order to destroy or forcibly displace the people there. Most of the Kokang people, of predominantly Han Chinese ethnicity, are not recognised as citizens of Burma. However, the Kokang people have lived in the region since the 18th Century. Most have different identification cards and are treated as second class citizens.

Prior to and during the attacks, the Government has disseminated intense anti-Chinese sentiment via the state-sponsored media, in order to support their attacks on the Kokang people under the guise of defending Burmese land. SHRF estimates that tens of thousands have been displaced to the borderlands and into China since recent fighting began. People are fearful of returning home due to reports of killing,

beheading and disappearance of those who have attempted to do so.

The following cases were documented from recent interviews with Kokang refugees by SHRF:¹

| No. | Date | Location | Case summary |
|-----|-----------------|----------------------|---|
| 1 | Feb 12, 2015 | Xi Mi Cun village | An elderly villager shot dead in his home by the Burmese Army |
| 2 | Feb 14, 2015 | Xi Mi Cun village | An elderly blind villager found burned to death in his home |
| 3 | Feb 15-16, 2015 | Lao Dong Go village | An elderly villager killed by a Burmese Army shell in his home |
| 4 | Mid-March, 2015 | Xi Mi Cun village | Four refugees returned to their village: two of their bodies were found dead in the village, one beheaded; two have disappeared |
| 5 | April 14, 2015 | Nr. Son Shan village | Four returning refugees were shot at by the Burmese Army; three of them have disappeared |

On 3rd May, ironically World Press Freedom Day, the Public Relations and Psychological Warfare department of the Burmese Government announced, "*As the state has announced that the Kokang insurgent group (MNDA) is an unlawful association, the press and media are now informed to absolutely not broadcast and publish statements made [by the MNDA] at the meeting held in Panghsang. If they do, action will be taken according to the current laws.*"² This comes as no surprise as the Government has a history of severe restrictions over civil liberties and press

¹ Shan Human Rights Foundation, 11th May 2015: <http://www.shanhumanrights.org/index.php/news-updates/212-killing-beheading-and-disappearance-of-villagers-instill-fear-of-return-among-kokang-refugees>

² Myanmar Times, 6th May 2015: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/home-page/143-editor-s-pick/14316-media-freedom-and-the-tatmadaw.html>

freedom, earning them a Freedom House rating of 6 in early 2015 (7 being the worst score)³. The Government has the strong financial motive of foreign investment to shield the international community from reports of the horrific human rights abuses and attacks on civilians occurring in the Kokang region right now.

Each of the groups with whom we spoke highlighted the increased weaponry employed by the Burmese military, including the introduction of heavy weapons, tanks, armoured trucks, helicopter gunships and jets in northern Shan State. On 21st January 2015, the Burmese Government ratified the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention⁴. However, in recent reports from Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) spokesman, Tun Myat Lin, said, *“Among the 1,500 shells they fired at our outposts, about five contained chemicals [on 23rd April 2015, Kokang region]. The smoke from them was different from other shells: it was bright with a fragrant smell. Our soldiers who inhaled it got nauseous and vomited.”*⁵ These allegations require urgent investigation as the use of chemical weapons is prohibited under international law.

Although, on this visit we did not meet Rohingya representatives, we are deeply concerned for the Rohingya people who are still denied citizenship in Burma despite their long history of residence. In an interview from a recent [report](#) by The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, a Rohingya leader said: *“All of the warning*

signs [of genocide] are happening to us today.”

SHRF told us that they are now deeply concerned that anti-Muslim sentiment is being stirred up in Shan State, and are investigating the situation further.

For a list of recent attacks (February – April 2015) please see Appendix 3.

³ Freedom House, 2015:

<https://freedomhouse.org/country/myanmar#.VVIxOPIViko>

⁴

<http://www.armscontrol.org/blog/ArmsControlNews/2015-01-28/Myanmar-Ratifies-Chemical-Weapons-Convention>

⁵ Democratic Voice of Burma, 25th April 2015:

<http://www.dvb.no/news/burmese-army-using-chemical-weapons-say-kokang-rebels-burma-myanmar/50218>

2.2. CURRENT CEASEFIRE AND PEACE PROCESS NEGOTIATIONS

“Peace is only on the Government side’s terms. One side cannot make peace. There must be discussion between the Government, ethnic armed groups and political parties. There is no evidence of change for the people on the ground.” – Sai Paing, Loi Kaw Wan Camp Secretary

The committee of Loi Kaw Wan IDP camp still do not see any improvement in the political situation of the Shan people: *“The peace process is going backwards. There is still fighting in Shan, Kokang region, Kachin and Rakhine States. The peace process is not moving forward.”* Ethnic voices have not been heard in the peace process: *“The ethnic people want a federal system, and that is what they want to be able to discuss. Instead, the unitary system continues to expand as aid and investment is channeled through the Government in Naypyidaw and Rangoon.”*

During the visit we were unable to meet with leaders of ethnic opposition groups as they were involved in a 6-day long summit to discuss a draft National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) at the headquarters of the United Wa State Army (UWSA) in Pangsang, Shan State. At the end of this Summit representatives of 12 armed ethnic groups⁶ released a 12-point statement outlining their demands to government negotiators before a final deal could be signed. At the IDP camp, committee leaders told us that a peace agreement at this stage could not be enough; the peace process must become fully comprehensive in order to be lasting

⁶ Complete list: Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), Karen National Union (KNU), Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), New Mon State Party (NMSP), Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP), National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), United Wa State Army (UWSA), Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO), Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF), Arakan Army (AA), and Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA).

and effective and will require further negotiation. This summit follows the signing of a draft peace deal on 31st March 2015 between the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) coalition of 16 armed ethnic groups, and the Government’s Union Peace-Making Work Committee (UPWC).

The nationwide ceasefire negotiations have been in negotiation for almost a year and a half and still is neither convincing nor inclusive. We were told by one representative, *“The fundamental problem with the nationwide ceasefire negotiations is that the Burma Army has not pulled back any of its forces from the ethnic areas, and is even launching new offensives, during talks, which is not conducive to trust.”*

2.3. LAND EXPROPRIATION AND LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENTS

Much of Burma’s valuable natural resources lie in the ethnic national areas. This causes ongoing tensions between the Burmese military regime and the ethnic people who inhabit these areas. Military presence is particularly strong in areas with valuable resources, in order to control and instill fear in the people.

Time and time again, we heard reports of how ethnic nationals have been forced off their land by the Government for development projects; resource extraction, particularly jade, gold and coal mining projects; dams and repopulation by pro-Government populations. The Burmese Government issues permits to large businesses for resource exploration and subsequent exploitation. We were told: *“Companies are ready to research new places to dig for natural resources, because the Burmese Government has already given permission to them.”* There has also been extensive deforestation for the timber market, resulting in the destruction of the livelihoods of those who rely on the forest, as well as environmental degradation.

In Kachin State, many IDPs have told KWAT that they have been given compensation by the Government, only to find that it is for a photo opportunity before being stolen back. An IDP in Loi Kaw Wan camp told us that some of his villagers' land had been taken with compensation of the equivalent to US\$1 per acre - they were told they could buy their land back for US\$300 per acre. Frequently no compensation is offered at all, simply violent force.

Please see HART's recent [report](#) for information on the impact of large-scale development initiatives in Burma.

2.4. The situation for IDPs and refugees

The situation for IDPs in Burma and refugees in Thailand and China continues to be challenging due to shortages of essential supplies such as food and healthcare, and increasing poverty and danger. Those forced to flee from Shan and Kachin States into Thailand are not granted refugee status, unlike their neighbours from Karen State. Consequently, they cannot stay in official camps which are partially supported by larger aid organisations. Very few donors are now willing to support refugees in Thailand: *"People are only interested in work by the Government on the inside [of Burma] now, but there is a need outside [in Thailand and China] too."*

Informal camps are severely under-funded making access to food, healthcare and education extremely difficult. Food rations have been cut in half over the past few years so it is increasingly difficult for refugees to feed their families. Many are seeking unofficial work outside of the camp - this work was described by KWAT as, *"The three D's: dirty, dangerous and difficult."* Lack of official status leaves migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation.

The UNHCR, who estimated in July 2014 that there were 374,000 IDPs in Burma and

479,706 refugees living outside Burma (figures likely to be drastic underestimates due to unofficial migration), has recently announced its plan for refugees' return to Burma. The UNHCR aims to facilitate 20,000 returnees in 2015⁷. This will primarily affect the officially recognised camps for Karen and Karenni refugees. However, these plans are deeply disturbing to those working with all refugees in Thailand. The Thai Government is becoming increasingly strict, often coming to the camps to do headcounts. Koug Jor camp (an unofficial camp for Shan refugees) in northern Thailand is now prevented from accepting new refugees, although many cross the border each day due to ongoing land grabs.

Refugees are concerned that if they return to their homes in Burma, their children will not receive an education. SWAN's support through its schools and scholarship program means that children from the refugee camps can access education up to university level in the Thai system. Children in the IDP camps can complete schooling up to Grade 8. In these schools, children are also free to learn the Shan language which is important to their identity. In Burma, Shan people are not allowed to teach their own language in schools as part of the Burmese Government's cultural oppression.

Indirectly, by cutting cross-border aid and refugee relief service provision, the international community is forcing refugees and IDPs back into unsafe territory. As one woman put it, *"Villagers would not need aid if it was safe for them to return to their homes."* The Burmese Army's use of landmines in civilian areas means that many feel afraid to return to their homes. We heard numerous reports of the Army planting landmines inside or around people's homes. Furthermore, around some IDP camps, the Army has planted mines on

⁷ UNHCR, 2015:
<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e4877d6.html>

the perimeter to prevent people from returning to their homes: *“They can hear dogs that wander out of the camp stepping on them [the landmines]; they are too afraid to leave.”* Continued military presence in ethnic areas is a strong deterrent to repatriation.

There are 100,000 Kachin IDPs along the border with China (in the area controlled by KIO). NGOs are denied access to these camps by the Burmese Government. In the Government controlled areas there are a further ~70,000 IDPs. In these areas there have been numerous arrests and torture for alleged “unlawful association” with the KIO. KWAT is collecting data for a joint report with a Kachin CBO for publication next year.

CASE STUDY: LOI KAW WAN IDP CAMP, SHAN STATE

At present, the camp is home to 488 households, with a total population of 2712.

The camp was established in 2001, when people in Mong Hsat township were forced to flee the military regime. Initially people stayed in the jungle but later established the camp near to the Shan State Army-South (SSA-S) base for safety. In 2006/7, the heavy fighting in Shan State forced the relocation of people from other parts of Burma, including Akha and Lahu hill tribes. Within the camp there are Christians, Buddhists and Animists living in harmony.

The area is very limited for growing food, as the soil is not fertile. The land is not enough for the population and they do not want to cut down the trees. The Burmese military have a camp bordering Loi Kaw Wan on one side, and a UWSA camp is on the other. Because of this the camp cannot expand. It is difficult for the people who have traditionally farmed to be unable to pursue this livelihood and feed themselves.

Aid agencies have supported the camp with food for 10 years. However, they began reducing the rations in 2010 when their

donors began shifting their focus to giving support under the government inside Burma. The people now receive 12kg of rice, plus a small amount of salt, per capita per month. They used to receive 16kg of rice plus chili, oil, charcoal and yellow beans. The people try to supplement their diet where possible with plants that grow naturally in the area. However, these plants are seasonal and sometimes unavailable. The people do not have enough food, which has resulted in widespread anxiety and depression. One suicide case has been attributed to these shortages.

SWAN also supports the camp with food where possible, but their own limited funding and massive overstretch means that this support is not enough. For example, reduction in SWAN funding means that they can no longer provide lunch for pupils in the school. Malnutrition is a serious problem in the camp and so there is great concern for children’s wellbeing. Parents find it very difficult to provide lunches for their children with such limited rations.

During the rainy season when tea leaves can be picked, some people earn money by working on the nearby tea plantations. They earn 20 – 50 THB per day (~30 – 90p).

SCHOOL

The school opened in 2001. The first group of students are now the teachers in the school, striving to continue to educate their people.

The school runs from Kindergarden (at 5 years old) to 8th Grade (roughly 15 – 16 years old, although the grade system works on education level not age). There are 10 classrooms, with varying class sizes across the Grades. Pupils sit exams on 10th March, according to the IDP syllabus. Headteacher Lao Mon says, *“When you compare our pupils’ ability with Thai students across the border, they are better at English and Maths.”* The school also teaches Thai language.



Above: The school building at Loi Kaw Wan camp where there are 200 students. There are 16 members of staff, including 12 teachers.

SWAN and Shan State Development Fund (SSDF) support the school in a small way, but this contribution is not enough for the resources that they require and staff wages. They urgently request new donors to fund education. The people in the camp place great value on education. They do not know when or if they will be able to return to their homes so they want to equip young people with skills and knowledge for their uncertain future.

Due to the uncertainty they face, the Community Committee is developing a school sustainability plan for the future. They have started planning for a small tea plantation of their own to generate income for the school. However, it will be five years before the first harvest is ready. They also hope to start raising livestock on a small scale and to plant a vegetable garden. However, they require initial funding for these projects. They hope that these ideas will enable them to provide children's

lunches again to help combat malnutrition. They request support for their sustainability plans.

CLINIC

From 2002 - 2004, the Loi Kaw Wan clinic was based on the Thai side of the border. However, the Thai military forced the camp to move back inside Shan State. There are now 15 staff: 10 health workers, including one midwife, and 5 other members of staff who take care of cooking and transportation of severely ill patients, including those with TB, Hepatitis, HIV, cancer and fractures, who require treatment in Mae Salong or Chiang Rai in Thailand.

The clinic is losing staff because it is not able pay them a salary. It is therefore very difficult for them to support their own families, especially as they do not have time to take on additional work. The 10 health workers at the clinic work at huge personal sacrifice to bring healthcare to their people.



Above: the ward at Loi Kaw Wan camp clinic. The clinic sees 15 – 20 patients per day or 200 – 250 per month.

Like many other projects that we saw on this visit, the clinic at Loi Kaw Wa camp is losing donors. Four years ago the project received 100,000 THB per month. It now receives 60,000 THB per month and this looks to be decreasing.

The most common ailments are upper respiratory tract infections (due to smoke from slash and burn farming strategies), asthma, pneumonia, diarrhoea, worms, Hepatitis C, TB and HIV. The clinic also works on preventative measures such as teaching sanitation and malaria prevention. They have been able to provide every household with a mosquito net.

Please see Appendix 1 for individual stories from Loi Kaw Wan Camp.

Top right: a poster raising awareness of symptoms and causes of HIV and teaching preventative measures.

Bottom right: family planning poster teaching about use of contraceptives.



2.5. Drug Abuse

Drug abuse and addiction across the ethnic areas in Burma is being proliferated by instability in the region becoming increasingly destructive. The main drugs that are being used are amphetamines (most commonly *Yama*, which is a form of methamphetamine usually used in horse medication and produced cheaply), opium and heroin.

In Shan and Kachin states, children as young as 7 years old are now using drugs regularly. Although drug abuse is more prevalent in men, increasingly women are also becoming addicted. Families have been torn apart by the financial and social implications of drug abuse. SWAN highlighted to us that drug abuse has been linked to the high incidence rate of domestic violence.

One young man at Loi Kaw Wan camp, told us, *“80% from my village were using drugs. The police are the traffickers so there is no enforcement. Police give drugs to the villagers to sell. Alcohol is a big problem as well. The police put amphetamines in the alcohol and people go mad.”*

The Government, which is supposedly working towards a “Drug-Free” Burma (postponed from 2014 to 2019) has not shown any commitment to tackling the problem. Occasionally, small scale drug dealers are arrested, as a token gesture of drug control, but more apparently for the purposes of obtaining bribes from local people. Drug traffickers and the police have a relationship whereby a blind eye is turned to selling drugs in ethnic areas. According to IDPs in Loi Kaw Wan camp, opium is being grown by the Burmese Army specifically for the purpose of selling it to young people from ethnic national communities.

A group of 200 people, both men and women, called the “Voice of Suffering Women” have mobilised against drug addiction in 20 Shan and Kachin villages. This is dangerous work as recently, civilians

undertaking anti-drug work have been arrested and tortured by the Burmese Army. The group demonstrates the determination of local people to fight the drug problem that is invading their communities.

In October 2014, KWAT published [*“Silent Offensive – How Burma Army strategies are fuelling the Kachin Drug Crisis”*](#) a powerful report with interviews with those affected by drug use. The following quotation is from this report:

“I buy drugs from Kachin people and also sell drugs to Kachin people. I sell about 6 ‘penicillin’ bottles [of heroin] in one day, and use one for myself. I hardly eat any food. I just inject No.4 [heroin]... I inject in my legs, arms, hands, the inside of my thighs, all over my body. Sometimes, if I can’t find a vein to inject, then I just cut a hole in my temple and put the drugs inside, then put a plaster over the top.”

Please see section *Appendix 1a. SWAN* for more information on actions that SWAN has taken in response to requests for educational materials to combat drug abuse in Shan communities.

2.6. SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual Violence continues to be committed by the Burmese Army with impunity.

Representatives from KWAT told us: *“We want the Government to legally protect women from sexual violence. The Burmese Government is the same as the military regime. Sexual violence is committed by the military. We can’t find justice for survivors. Women and children have no safety.”* In a recent case, soldiers from the Burmese Army attempted to rape a 73 year old grandmother. The [*Women’s League of Burma*](#) (WLB) continues to lobby and advocate tirelessly for justice for those affected by sexual violence, and to seek to put an end to military impunity.

Many case studies can be found in the WLB's 2014 report: "[If they had hope, they would speak](#)" which documents 118 incidences of gang-rape, rape, and attempted sexual assault in Burma since 2010, in both ceasefire and non-ceasefire areas. This report builds upon previous evidence submitted in SWAN's 2002 report "[Licence to Rape](#)" and WLB's January 2014 report "[Same Impunity, Same Patterns](#)".

CASE STUDY: RAPE AND MURDER OF TWO KACHIN TEACHERS

On the night of 19th January 2015, two female Kachin teachers, Maran Lu Ra (20 years old) and Tangbau Hkawn Nan Tsin (21 years old) from the Kachin Baptist Convention, were brutally raped and killed by the Burmese Army⁸. The attack took place in Kaunghka village, Northern Shan State.

We were told: *"On the ground, the Army is taking advantage of the silence of the international community. For example, in the case of the murder and rape of two Kachin teachers, with immediate photographic evidence, the perpetrators were still treated with impunity."*

2.7. Forced Labour

Many of the IDPs with whom we spoke on this visit were forced to flee to escape forced labour, most commonly portering for the Burmese Army.

Story of Sa Vi Thu La, village leader:

Sa Vi Thu La grew up in northern Shan state before he was forced to flee from forced labour working in the military camp and building a road. He was used as a porter. Each person would be forced to carry a heavy load, as well as acting as a human minesweeper and to shield Burmese soldiers from fire from ethnic armed

⁸ Burma Campaign UK, 20th January 2015: <http://burmacampaign.org.uk/two-kachin-teachers-brutally-raped-and-killed-by-burmese-army/> (reported on numerous outlets).

groups. He witnessed the beating and even killing of those who found their load too heavy. When those people could no longer continue, their loads would be added to those of other people still standing.

2.8. HUMAN TRAFFICKING

KWAT told us that trafficking of female refugees in China is prevalent due to extreme poverty: *"People are pushed off their land because of the economic crisis, development projects, fighting and land confiscation – women and girls then have to cross the border to China in search of a job."*

In June 2013, KWAT released a detailed report on human trafficking called "[Pushed to the Brink](#)".

2.9. 2015 ELECTIONS

The 2015 elections in Burma have been earmarked internationally as the final stage in Burma's democratic transition. However, meetings on this visit revealed a very different perception by those from ethnic minority groups.

A recurring response when asked about the elections was that ethnic nationals are so disenfranchised that they have no interest in participating in an election which promises no change. The camp secretary of Loi Kaw Wan said: *"People are worried about their daily survival so they cannot think about politics."* For others, the corruption in the previous election, particularly in vote counts in rural areas, leaves no hope for this round. Sai Harn Aung, a teacher in Loi Kaw Wan camp told us: *"There is no hope. Not for us. The military and Thein Sein [incumbent President] do things that we do not know. The military is completely infiltrated in politics."*

Many told us that this election will still be profoundly flawed due to the restrictions of the 2008 Constitution and ongoing military power over politics. The Secretary at Loi Kaw Wan camp told us: *"If the 2008*

Constitution is not changed it is not a good way to hold an election. It is not a good sign. There will be no change because Parliament is 25% military. The election cannot be genuine if the constitution is not amended."

When we asked about whether the National League for Democracy (Aung San Suu Kyi's party) could make any real change, we were told, *"We don't trust anyone anymore."* Aung San Suu Kyi continues to be the darling of the Western world, a symbol of democracy and success in Burma. However, to date she has not adequately spoken out about the plight of ethnic nationals. It remains to be seen whether this has been necessary to garner support or whether she does lack commitment to these people.

2.10. The Role of the International Community, NGOs and Investors

"Where there is need they don't give and so where there is need and suffering there is no support" – representative from SWAN

SWAN, Doh Say, KWAT and SHRF each reported a diversion of funding from CBOs delivering essential cross-border aid, to large aid organisations working in-country from Rangoon, in conjunction with the Government's Peace Process. International governments and large donors perceive the supposed democratic reform in Burma as a sign of near complete transition to free and fair governance by a civilian elected government. They consequently are providing more funding through or under Government administration structures, and effectively condoning Government led persecution of ethnic nationals.

By providing funds through the Government and restricted INGOs in

Rangoon, donors halt the flow of aid to ethnic nationals, as the Government restricts humanitarian access to many of the areas populated by ethnic nationals. While large aid organisations may be able to improve the human rights situation in large cities and areas where the government permits them to go, only local people are able to deliver much needed support to rural ethnic areas, highlighting the great importance of working with CBOs.

HART is deeply concerned that DfID is changing its policy regarding CBOs and their cross-border aid delivery. In the next funding period, DfID intends to deliver all cross-border aid through the IRC. This new process of funding delivery presents problems for community-based, independent organisations with limited resources.

The ethnic nationals express a general feeling of abandonment by the international community who have become silent on human rights abuses in Burma, relaxing pressure on the Government. It is HART's mandate to work with those suffering oppression and persecution in situations that are widely under-reported. Yet it still comes as a surprise to us to be told, when in Chiang Mai (a city easily accessible in Thailand), that, *"It is very rare to have people asking about what is happening on the ground. No one is interested; they only care about the peace process."* They say: *"We feel forgotten."* It is HART's privilege to be able to hear and report the stories of those trapped in conflict and to try to promote support for their survival.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HART wishes to offer our warmest thanks to everyone who gave us their time, hospitality and logistical support, and who shared their stories and insights with us. Particular thanks go to our partners at SWAN, for their support on this visit and for all of their inspirational work for peace and development in such difficult circumstances. We are also deeply grateful to Doh Say and all those at KWAT, SHRF and the Community Committee of Loi Kaw Wan camp who shared so much in meetings during our visit.

Caroline Cox, CEO
Reverend David Thomas, Project Logistics
Samantha Hudson, Administrator
May 2015

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. HART'S PARTNERS

1A. SHAN WOMEN'S ACTION NETWORK (SWAN)

HART has supported SWAN for eight years and is currently their second largest donor after DfID. The full title of the programme that we support is the "Community Health and Maternal and Child Health Education and Service Delivery Programme" (known under the previous acronym of WHP). This comprehensive programme is the 2012 amalgamation of the Women's Health Programme (WHP) and the Women's Crisis Support Programme (WCSP).

Their projects cover the following areas:

- SWAN supports 11 schools in northern Thailand (nine primary schools, two secondary schools, plus a further two nurseries). They also run four boarding houses for orphans on the border, and two in an IDP camp on the border.
- All teachers come together annually for conference-style training, provided by SWAN, that goes on for 10 days. This provides them with the opportunity to share experiences and teaching methods whilst learning together.
SWAN requires further financial support for their education initiative. Teachers salaries are around \$100/month or lower, teachers teach because in their hearts they want to help, the money is not enough to be a good incentive. They also require teaching resources.
- So far, SWAN has trained 90 health workers (some of whom are social workers). SWAN provides further training to those with some basic medical knowledge (for example auxiliary nurses) in order to extend their capacity. Dr Cynthia Maung will help SWAN to deliver training to the CHWs – this training will start in June this year. The work of CHWs is difficult and dangerous, for example, the jungle is not safe for them to travel, they must be accompanied and this is not always possible.
- CHWs are carrying out annual surveys to collect data on the populations with whom they work. This primary data will help SWAN identify the key needs in their areas so that they can tailor training and provide appropriate medicines. 7 CHWs have now sent data, plus some nutritional data. Some have already collected their data in 2014 but SWAN has not yet received it because they are based in rural areas without good phone lines.
- SWAN supports 130 HIV/AIDs cases. This support includes counseling and support with obtaining and taking antiretroviral drugs (ARVs).
- The introduction of free family planning services in camps has been a great success. Shan families only want to have 2 or 3 children so family planning is helpful to them. It is difficult for families to support a large number of children.
- There is a public health specialist from the US who has been helping Nang Hearn with data collection and analysis. In 2011, he came to focus on reproductive health and continues to provide support in new areas. He has many years of experience in the region. SWAN's Women's Wellbeing Coordinator will shortly complete a Masters Degree in Public Health.
- SWAN's information and documentation staff focus on ensuring that migrants in Thailand have access to information that impacts their lives. The language barrier means that Shan migrants would not otherwise have information about changes in Thai law and services concerning them. The team broadcasts on three radio stations, most notably a bi-weekly slot on MAP radio. The shows focus on women's and children's

health. The show also offers the opportunity for women to phone in and receive after-show counseling if necessary. The audience consists of men and women and has been useful in teaching men about the importance of women's rights and equal treatment. The show is also used by those learning or wanting to maintain skills in the Shan language.

- Women in Shan State told SWAN that one of their key priorities was combating drug use. SWAN have therefore produced a documentary called *"It's time to shatter the silence"* in Shan language which is used as an advocacy and educational tool. The documentary features a family who have been deeply affected by drug abuse. It has been very popular and a number of people have asked to reproduce it – which SWAN allows them to do.
- SWAN has made a significant difference to how women are perceived in the community; they have shown that women have a place in politics and not just in the home. Domestic violence is a problem within Shan communities because of the traditional role of women. SWAN's feminist advocacy is empowering women to claim their rights.
- SWAN was one of the founding members of the umbrella group the Women's League of Burma. SWAN Spokesperson, Ying Harn Fah, is a Policy Board Member. WLB is primarily working on increasing female participation in Parliament, they also do work on sexual violence and health. It is empowering for women's groups of different ethnicities across Burma to work together in their fight against military abuse and oppression.

For individual case studies of patients that SWAN is assisting, please see Appendix 2.

*CASE STUDIES OF SWAN'S WORK SUPPORTING MIGRANTS FORCED BY WAR OR
DISPLACEMENT TO LIVE IN THAILAND*

NA WA PERN (CHILD) AND NANG TING AUW (MOTHER)



Na Wa Pern was born disabled from the waist down. She also had a large tumour on her back which has now been removed, this operation cost 9400 THB which was contributed to by SWAN.

Na Wa Pern has already had an operation to insert splints into her legs to keep her comfortable. This operation cost 100,000 THB (~£1900) and is being slowly paid for by her mother in installments. There is a chance that she may be able to walk in the future with a further operation; this will be determined by an Xray in the near future. Without this operation, she will not even be able to wheel a basic wheelchair in the future. The cost of this operation is not yet known. She must visit the hospital every week which means that her mother can only work 2-3 days per week. Sometimes Na Wa Pern gets ill and has to stay in the hospital for a prolonged period of time.

Her mother works at a printing house in order to be able to afford to live in Chiang Mai so that her daughter can receive medical treatment. Her monthly wage is 7,500THB (~£142). However, this is often cut when she works reduced hours in order to take her daughter to hospital. Sometimes her daughter has to stay in hospital for a number of weeks at a time, in which instance the mother receives no wage.

Their rent for a room in Chiang Mai costs 2,000 THB (~£38) per month. They have recently had to move from slightly cheaper accommodation because it was not safe and on numerous occasions men attempted to break into the room to rape the mother. Being a single mother is difficult; her husband left the family while she was pregnant.

SWAN helps to support the small family by providing milk, babysitter support while the mother is at work from 7am – 5.30pm, and support for medical expenses. The babysitter cannot

perform all the care of her mother: the babysitter cannot help her urinate using a catheter due to risk of infection. The cost of the first operation on her legs is being paid in installments. SWAN partially assists with this.

“If SWAN did not exist, life would not be possible for me. I cannot do this by myself because I need to work to pay for rent and medical bills. I have to go to the hospital for long periods and then my wages are reduced. SWAN helps me so much.”

MU

Mu developed chronic Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP) at the age of 7 years old. She has to receive medicines every month and attend check-ups. SWAN has supported her in medical expenses for the last 10 years – she is now 17 years old.

Although she is not in unbearable pain, the condition causes problems with the skin on her face and bruising over her entire body.

Mu lives at SWAN Foundation, another arm of SWAN where there is a safe house for abused women and health and educational projects. Her family are based in the IDP camp and cannot come with her. Bravely she said that this does not upset her and she is happy to be at SWAN Foundation.

Last year, HART paid the expense of her medical card which allows her to get treatment at far less expense than if SWAN were to pay each time she collected her medicines. HART will continue to do so this year.



NANG PHONE (MOTHER) AND NOUNG MOON (CHILD)

Very sadly, Noug Moon was involved in a motorcycle accident in which her father was killed. She suffered severe injuries to the left hand side of her skull, for which she had an extensive operation in Chiang Mai. The accident has left her with a significantly weakened left hand side, although not full paralysis. This is being treated with physiotherapy, although she is reluctant to do painful and difficult exercises. The SWAN team are helping her to build strength using an approach akin to occupational therapy and we saw her lifting her arm and grabbing the finger of Kyein Kham. She has to return to hospital often for further treatment. The accident has left her with very stunted speech which has regressed significantly from her previous standard. She is 4 years and 6 months old.



Nang Phone found out about SWAN through her sister, who works at the same pottery business. Although they have lived in Chiang Mai for 6 years, when they had to flee from fighting in Shan State, they have been working at the business where we met them for 6 months. They live on site with three other families.

SWAN pays medicine costs, brings food and milk and contributed towards the cost of the operation on her skull.

Nang Phone said that *“without SWAN our lives would be impossible; we wouldn’t have food.”*

SWAN has already paid for a medical card for the Nong Moon. However, by 10th June, her mother requires a new temporary Foreign Work Permit (which also allows access – though not free – to healthcare if necessary). The cost of this permit is 3000 THB and will enable the pair to stay near to Chiang Mai where Nong Moon can continue to receive medical treatment and the pair will be safe.

“SONGS OF HEALING” BY KHAM YARD, SWAN⁹

April 17, 2015

This is a story from Kham Yard, a long-time staff member of IWDA program partner Shan Women’s Action Network (SWAN) in the Burma & Borders region. Kham Yard recently wrote a collection of stories from her experiences over more than a decade of work with SWAN. Following is one of her stories.

I remember when SWAN published its ‘Licence to Rape’ report in 2002, things were very tense. There were times when, as staff members, we feared the recriminations of the Burmese government so much that we couldn’t go to work; we were rendered housebound. But while the world started to pay attention to what was happening to the ethnic women of Burma, military impunity for sexual crimes committed inside the country continued.

Meanwhile, more and more rape survivors, in desperate need of emotional and physical support, were fleeing to the Thai-Burma border. As interns at SWAN, I and other young women received training to become counsellors for survivors of rape. The training was comprehensive, but I remember that amidst all the learning, clinical practice and discussion, I felt a bit disconnected from reality. I desperately hoped that I would be able to help these women, in any way I could. I was eager to get into the field and practise what we had learnt.

At one place on the border, we met twelve women who had been brutally raped in their village by roaming Burmese military personnel. Two of the women were born mute, and used sign language to communicate. You could see that they were all very sick, both physically and emotionally. Some bore vacant expressions, like they had left their true selves somewhere else. Somewhere safe. Others avoided eye contact, their trust for fellow human beings shattered. All had neglected their personal hygiene – they had stopped washing, stopped caring. One of the women, who was slightly built, with high cheek bones and tangled, sun bleached hair, stared at me intensely. I looked deep into her dark eyes but couldn’t hold her gaze. It was disconcerting, like seeing the shell of someone. Being there with them was gut wrenching.

The twelve women joined SWAN’s 3-day counselling workshop, during which I tried to work with them, to help them rebuild their strength. I told them that it wasn’t their fault, what happened to

⁹ IWDA, 17th April 2015: <https://www.iwda.org.au/songs-of-healing/>

them. I told them that their abuse was deliberate weapon, used to terrorise the community. I told them that they are so much more than what happened to them. It was not easy. At times I felt the weight of their pain and I struggled to keep going. But my role was not to break down, not to carry their pain but rather, to help them find ways to lighten their own load. And I kept going.

As we were closing the workshop, one of the twelve women got to her feet. She said she would like to give us something special. Her hands trembled slightly but her voice was clear and strong. In a lilting tone, she sang a song of gratitude, thanking us for our help. Her voice was edged with sadness, but after each quiver, instead of breaking, her voice seemed to grow. It was as if through her pain, she found new strength, not aggressive or combative, but a strength imbued with compassion and determined resilience. A feminist strength. A strength that heals and grows. The kind of strength that's hard to break.

Even though I had never sung in front of people before, let alone composed a song of any kind, I got up and sang them a response in which I recognised that strength, and urged them to support each other as women. Moments such as this one make me realise that strength like that can be uplifting and contagious. It is that kind of strength that Burma needs.

Authors:

Kham Yard has worked in the Women's Empowerment Program at SWAN for more than ten years, delivering psycho-social support to ethnic women from Shan State, Burma. She recently became a member of SWAN's Advisory Team.

Natasha Nicholson formerly volunteered with IWDA, where she developed an interest in Burma and the ethnic women's movement. She now works with SWAN in Chiang Mai.

Background:

In 2002, SWAN, together with the Shan Human Right Foundation, published a report called 'Licence to Rape'. It documented 173 cases of sexual violence committed against women and girls by members of the Burmese military between 1996 and 2001. The report drew widespread international attention to the human right abuses committed against ethnic women from Burma.

CASE STUDIES FROM LOI KAW WAN CAMP

PETA – MEDIC



Above: Peta stands outside the clinic at Loi Kaw Wan IDP camp

Peta has received the Sao Thusandi Leadership Award for his achievements in providing healthcare to Loi Kaw Wan camp. Although he has never been taught English formally in school, he told us his story in perfect and self-taught English.

Peta was born in Shan state in a small rural village. When he was eight years old he went to school for two years. However, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) came to his village and burnt down his school.

In 1988, his friends and teachers took him to northern Thailand to study health. He continued his training around the border area. In 2002, he moved to Loi Kaw Wan and set up the clinic there.

He says, "I learnt a lot of topics like malaria control, lab training, CHW [community health worker] training and medic training. My knowledge is not good enough to be a medic but I have a very good will to help these people who are suffering from disease. People do not have the money to go to Thailand. Medicine and travel is expensive. Villagers have no money to pay for health. I try my best. We do not have any doctor so health workers must work like doctors. It is not enough but better than nothing."

Peta's personal story is tragic and far too common. Within his family, his father suffered forced labour in which he was tortured with burning cigarettes; he later died of dehydration due to diarrhea. One brother died in a motorcycle accident on the Thai side of the border; two brothers died of diseases (one aged one week old and the other four years old) and his sister died of

malnutrition aged one year old. Peta now strives to prevent such deaths in his community at Loi Kaw Wan.

SAI SAM LOON – VILLAGER FROM IDP CAMP

Sai Sam Loon was a village leader in Moung Loong, Moung Sat District, eastern Shan State. He was the headman of five villages together, a total of 270 households.

In June 2003, the military burned down two of these villages and arrested 48 men and over 60 women. One woman and two men were shot dead. The rest were captured and tortured but eventually released. One man was given an injection and later died back in his village. The military believed that Sai Harn Aung was a contact for the Shan State Army. Burmese soldiers abused and tortured him for seven days. He showed us the scars on his wrists where he had been tied. He eventually escaped his bonds in the middle of the night and fled to the border. There he heard about Lai Kaw Wa came and made his way there.

One of his children died of malaria. His other two children and wife are now at the camp with him, having been captured by the military for three months. It cost Sai Harn Aung the equivalent of 20,000 THB to have them released.

Last year Sai Harn Aung attempted to return to his village but he found that nearly all of the homes had been destroyed. Most of the families had all been forced to flee; those left were being used for forced labour. The land had been sold off to a pro-Government community. Those families who had remained had been offered compensation of approximately \$1 per acre but for him to buy back his land it would cost him \$300 per acre. He also found that the forest had gone. He is very sad that his people have had their homes, land and belongings taken from them.

He said: *"There is no hope. Not for us. They do things that we do not know. The military is deeply infiltrated into politics."*

1B. UPDATE FROM DOH SAY

“They [the Burmese Government] shake hands but without a smiling heart... The Government doesn’t build clinics or schools because they don’t have a heart for the people.”

For six years, HART has been supporting the work of Doh Say in southern Karenni State. Doh Say’s work includes a mobile backpack team and support for two clinics based more permanently in villages. He also supports education, orphanages and care of the disabled and elderly. These clinics are the only healthcare provision



in the rural areas in which he works. Doh Say also works with Free Burma Rangers (FBR), who report on and provide support to communities suffering persecution by the Burmese Army in Kachin, Shan, Karen, Karenni States.

There are seven staff at Doh Say’s clinic. All medicines and training are supported by HART via Doh Say and the Karenni Health Department (KHD). Doh Say purchases his medicines in Bangkok. He also supports the wages of the staff when the KHD fails to pay them. The clinic staff are reliant on Doh Say because they know that they can trust him - Doh Say has been working consistently in the region since 1997. Recently, INGOs have been moving into the larger cities. However the Government controls their outreach and the local people remain unreached by their aid.

Doh Say will be able to provide his usual narrative and financial report following his visit in August.

Doh Say also supports the work of teachers in Karenni State. Although they do not have a school or teaching materials, Doh Say says *“The children want to study so we are ready to do teaching – maybe under the bamboo.”* Doh Say provides teachers with “pocket money” which assists them in supporting their families whilst teaching without a wage.

Doh Say has noticed a great deal of change in Burma: *“Less people have to flee for their lives because of fighting. But people are facing a new threat. Before, they were facing the direct threat of the attackers, but now they are facing the theft of land and farms.”* The Burmese Army and Government sell off peoples’ land without their consultation, using their corrupt legal system to steal from local people: *“Villagers do not have education so how can they fight against official papers?”* Many of the ethnic regions are rich in natural resources. Hence the Government expropriates land for great profit at the expense of local people. Doh Say explained *“before it was clear who the enemy was, they had guns. Now there are less guns but more enemies. We do not know who we can trust. Everyone is taking from us.”*

Accompanying this devastating expropriation of land is extreme environmental degradation. Doh Say told us that *“Previously people flying over could tell the difference between Thailand and Burma because Burma was green and Thailand was brown. Now it is the other way round. Burma*

is brown and Thailand is green. The Government has taken the trees. Also, the people can't drink the river water because it is brown from mining projects."

The ceasefire agreements and peace process feel like empty promises when Doh Say witnesses the strengthening military presence across the ethnic states where he travels. "Black zones" (areas whereby the Army can shoot to kill anyone they meet) have not been downgraded, and so the people cannot trust the new ceasefire agreements. Previously, the Army has repeatedly used strategic ceasefires to advance its own position before resuming attacks with complete disregard for the agreement.

Doh Say argues that ceasefire agreements do not work because they do not confront the real issues at the core of the conflict. Paper is signed, but never with true inclusion of the ethnic peoples or any effort at reconciliation. *"If the foundation is not solid you can make a beautiful house but it will not last. Same with this country. We all like the beauty but the foundations must be strong first. We need love and forgiveness."*

Message to HART supporters: *"Thank you for your love, kindness and ongoing support. I met Baroness Cox in 1994 when I did not know anything about politics. I have had great support from you over the years. Now you are helping to take care of the health of the people. There have been developments in this country, but if everyone is sick then there can be no developments. Healthcare is the most important thing. The clinics save many, many lives each year. Both travel and treatment are too expensive for people to go to the big cities to get healthcare, they need help at home. The clinics are very useful and they are very grateful for your support."*

APPENDIX 2. ABOUT HART

HART (Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust) was established in 2004 to provide aid and advocacy for victims of oppression and persecution, often trapped behind closed borders and 'off the radar screen' of international media; whose governments deny access by aid organisations and/or who are not being served by other aid organisations for security or political reasons.

HART relies on first-hand evidence of human rights violations, using this as a basis for a twin-track programme of international advocacy in arenas such as Parliament and the media; and targeted aid, focusing on local partnerships, sustainable community development, and regional networks of support. Through advocacy in national and international arenas, we can be a voice for those who have no voice and strive to present their problems with integrity and sensitivity.

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APPENDIX 3: INCIDENCES OF FIGHTING IN BURMA FEBRUARY – APRIL 2015¹⁰

| Date | Location | Type of attack | Weapons used | Number of people killed |
|---------|--------------------------------|--|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1st Feb | Namtu Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw ¹¹ troops from LID 77 clashed with TNLA Battalion 773 forces | | |
| 1st Feb | Tanai Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 38 clashed with KIA Battalion 14 forces | | |
| 1st Feb | Mongmit Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA forces | | |
| 2nd Feb | Mongmit Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA forces | | |
| 2nd Feb | Hpakant Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LID 66 seized a KIA post | | |

¹⁰ Key Sources:

AltSEAN 'Burma Briefs': <http://www.altsean.org/>

Shan Human Rights Foundation: <http://www.shanhumanrights.org/>

¹¹ 'Tatmadaw' is another word for the Burmese Army

| | | | | |
|----------|--|--|-------------------------------|---|
| 2nd Feb | Namtu Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA Battalion 8 forces | | |
| 2nd Feb | Mongmit Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 223 clashed with TNLA Battalion 717 forces | | |
| 3rd Feb | Pangdika Village, Mongmit Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw airstrike killed two civilians including a pregnant woman | air strike | 2 |
| 3rd Feb | Mongmit Township, Shan State | Three Tatmadaw helicopters attacked TNLA troops causing 2,000 residents to flee to monasteries and into the jungle | | |
| 4th Feb | Kutkai Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops beat one civilian and abducted 10 others, using them as human shields while ransacking several homes | | |
| 6th Feb | Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops launch airstrikes to support ground troops clashing with MNDAA, TNLA and Arakan Army joint forces | Airstrikes and ground clashes | |
| 9th Feb | Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with MNDAA and TNLA joint forces | | |
| 9th Feb | Kokang, Xi Mi Cun village | Fighting broke out between Burma Army and Kokang | | |
| 10th Feb | Laogai Township, and Konkyan Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed and launched airstrikes against MNDAA, TNLA and Arakan Army joint forces | Airstrikes and ground clashes | |
| 11th Feb | Laiza, Momauk Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops attacked the KIA headquarters | | |
| 11th Feb | Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed and launched airstrikes against MNDAA, TNLA and Arakan Army joint forces | Airstrikes and ground clashes | |
| 12th Feb | Laiza, Momauk Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 389 fired mortar shells at KIA Headquarters | Mortar shells | |
| 12th Feb | Kokang, Xi Mi Cun village | An elderly villager shot dead in his home by Burma Army | Gun shot | 1 |
| 13th Feb | Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops launched airstrikes against MNDAA and TNLA joint forces | Airstrikes | |

| | | | | |
|---------------|--|--|-------------------------------|----|
| 13th Feb | | Tatmadaw troops launched airstrikes against MNDA and TNLA joint forces | Airstrikes | |
| 14th Feb | Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with MNDA forces, seized weapons, ammunitions and recovered bodies of 13 MNDA soldiers. Also captured 8 soldiers who later died in custody | | 21 |
| 14th Feb | Kokang, Xi Mi Cun village | An elderly blind villager found burned to death in his home | Burned | 1 |
| 15th-16th Feb | Kokang, Lao Dong Go village | An elderly villager killed by Burma Army shell in his home | Shelling | 1 |
| 17th Feb | Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with MNDA and TNLA joint forces | | |
| 19th Feb | Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw forces clashed with MNDA forces 3 separate times | | |
| 19th Feb | Konkyan Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with MNDA forces | | |
| 20th Feb | Konkyan Township, and Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with MNDA forces 6 separate times on the road between the two townships. Seized weapons, ammunition and bodies of 2 MNDA soldiers | | 2 |
| 21st Feb | Near Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LID 11 and MOC 16 clashed with MNDA forces | | |
| 22nd Feb | Road between Konkyan Township and Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops attacked MNDA forces and launched airstrikes | Airstrikes and ground clashes | |
| 23rd Feb | Near Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops attacked and launched airstrikes against MNDA forces | | |

| | | | | |
|------------|---|---|--------------|---------------|
| 24th Feb | Near Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with MNDAA forces near Laogai Township and seized stimulant tablets, weapons and ammunition | | |
| 25th Feb | Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with MNDAA forces | | |
| 5th March | Kutkai Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA Battalion 223 forces | | |
| 8th March | Waingmaw Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 140 attacked a KIA post | | |
| 8th March | Manton Township and Kutkai Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA Battalion 571 forces | | |
| 9th March | Kutkai Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LID 99 clashed with TNLA forces | | |
| 9th March | Kawng Kat Village, Mankham Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LID 88 clashed with TNLA Battalion 478 and KIA Battalion 8 combined forces | | |
| 9th March | Laiza, Momauk Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 252 fired mortar shells at KIA Battalion 23 forces near KIA Headquarters | Mortar shell | |
| 10th March | Laogai Township, Kokang self-administered zone, Shan State | Mortar shell hit | Mortar shell | 2 children |
| 10th March | Waingmaw Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 222 attacked a KIA post | | 1 KIA soldier |
| 10th March | Hpakant Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 225 attacked a KIA post | | |
| 10th March | Waingmaw Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from IB 140 attacked a KIA post | | |

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| 11th March | Waingmaw Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from IB 255 destroyed a KIA post | | 1 KIA soldier |
| 12th March | Mogaung Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LIBs 385 and 386 clashed with KIA forces | | |
| 14th March | Manton Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LID 88 clashed with TNLA forces | | |
| 19th March | Muse Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LID 77 clashed with KIA Battalion 36 forces | | |
| Mid-March, 2015 | Kokang, Xi Mi Cun village | Four refugees returned to their village: two dead bodies were found in the village, one beheaded; two have disappeared | Beheaded and killed | 2 |
| 20th March | Muse Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA Battalion 571 forces | | |
| 21st March | Mansi Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 317 attacked a KIA post | | |
| 24th March | Mansi Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LIBs 10 and 317 used fighter jets to launch 3 rounds of airstrikes KIA Battalion 27 forces | Fighter jet airstrikes | |
| 24th March | Mung Ding Pa Village, Mansi Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 236 clashed with KIA Battalion 12 forces | | |
| 24th March | Kutkai Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 123 clashed with KIA Battalion 9 forces | | |
| 24th March | Mongmit Township, Kyaukme Township and Namkham Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA forces | | |
| 5th April | Mogaung Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA battalion 11 | | |
| 5th April | Kyaukme Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA forces | | |
| 5th April | Laogai Township, Kokang region, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LIDs 11, 33, and 66 clashed with MNDAA forces | | |

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| 7th April | Kyaukme Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LID 77 clashed with TNLA Battalion 987 forces | | |
| 7th April | | WFP estimated the conflict in Kokang self-administered zone had displaced 78,000 people since February | | |
| 8th April | Laogai Township, Kokang region, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with MNDAA forces | | |
| 10th April | Mongaung Township, Kachin State | Landmine explosion killed a 16 year old boy | Landmine | 1 |
| 10th April | Pyingso Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State | Tatmadaw troops from IB 289 clashed with Arakan Army forces | | |
| 11th April | Muse Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troop fired mortar shells and clashed with KIA Battalion 36 forces | Mortar shells | |
| 13th April | Laogai Township, Kokang region, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with MNDAA forces | | |
| 14th April | Kokang, Nr. Son Shan village | Four returning refugees shot at by Burma Army; three have disappeared | Gun shot | |
| 17th April | Loilem Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw Soldier from LIB 513 attempted to rape a 14 year old girl | | |
| 17th April | Namkham Township, Shan State | Regime-backed militia clashed with TNLA forces | | |
| 17th April | Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with Arakan Army forces on 5 seperate occasions | | |
| 18th April | Hpakant Township, Kachin State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 423 clashed with KIA Battalion 6 forces | | |
| 19th April | Paletwa Township, Chin State | Tatmadaw troops raided homes and detained 5 Rakhine civillians with alleged ties to Arakan Army | | |
| 20th April | Thandaung Township, Karen State | Tatmadaw troops from IB 589 clashed with KNLA forces | | |
| 21st April | Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State | troops prevented humanitarian volunteers from entering th earea for three days | | |

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| 22nd April | Aung Lan Chuang Village, Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State | reported that Tatmadaw troops burned down the village displacing 400 people | | |
| 23rd April | Monkoe, Muse Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 501 shot and killed a cilian hunter hiding nearby | Gunshot | 1 |
| 23rd April | Laogai Township, Kokang region, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LID 33 clashed with MNDAA forces. ⁴ | MNDAA forces said that Tatmadaw troops had used chemical weapons during the clash, in the form of five mortar shells, causing soldiers to feel nauseous and vomit | |
| 24th April | Paletwa Township, Chin State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with unknown ethnic armed forces, capturing 3 soldiers and seizing weapons and amunition | | |
| 25th April | Nam Jarap Village, Hsenwi Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops shot and injured a Kachin youth | Gunshot | |
| 26th April | Laogai Township, Kokang region, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops attacked MNDAA forces. | | |
| 27th April | Muse Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA Battalion 101 forces | | |
| 28th April | Muse Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA Battalion 101 forces | | |
| 28th April | Muse Township, Shan State | Tatmadaw troops from LIB 503 clashed with KIA Battalion 38 forces | | |