

ORDERED OUT:

The costs of building Burma's Upper Paunglaung Dam

A group of European and Chinese investors is currently building a dam to power Burma's military capital which will force 8,000 mostly indigenous people from their homes by October this year. The forced relocation will leave villagers destitute: each household must tear down their home and abandon their farm fields, receiving in return just US\$50 in compensation. Security for the dam project has led to increased militarization and abuse of local populations while workers constructing the dam are toiling night and day for a mere US\$30 per month.

Dam builders often tout the benefits of dams as a key to a country's development. In Burma, nearly every day state-controlled media boasts progress on various dam projects as a sign of success. Yet dam projects in Burma lead to an increase in militarization, exacerbate ethnic conflict, and have been linked to forced relocations and forced labor. The Upper Paunglaung Dam is no exception. Therefore the companies involved in the project must be called on to stop this dam.



Threatened Valley

The Upper Paunglaung dam project is on the Paunglaung River, a tributary of the Sittaung, one of Burma's major rivers. It is located southeast of Pyinmana Hill in southwestern Shan State, just 50 kilometers from Burma's new military capital of Nay Pyi Taw.

The dam is at the southern end of the Paunglaung Valley, the only fertile plain along the river. The dam's 61 square kilometer reservoir will flood the entire valley which is home to 23 villages, or 8,000 people, who are mainly Kayan, Pa-Oh, and Burmese. The project started in 2004 and aimed to finish in 2009 but is currently only about 60% finished.

Companies Involved

AF-Colenco

AF-Colenco Ltd., a Swiss engineering company, was awarded a contract for a feasibility study of the project in 2004, for its design in 2006, and for the construction design of civil works in 2008. According to the company's newsletter, specialists from AF-Colenco "will advise the local contractor and supervise the dam construction." AF-Colenco is a part of the international **AF Group** based in Sweden.

Malcolm Dunstan and Associates

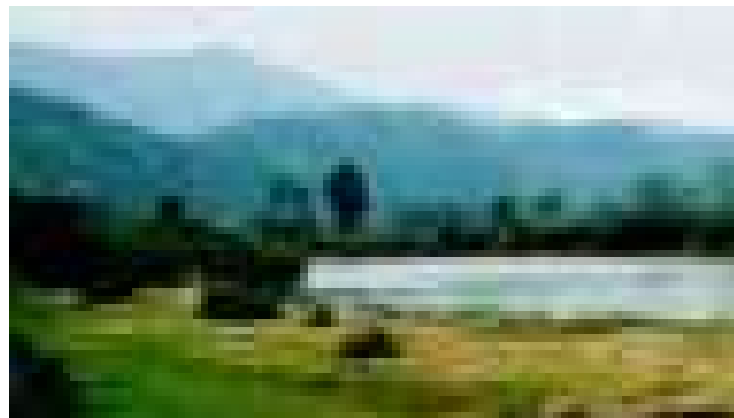
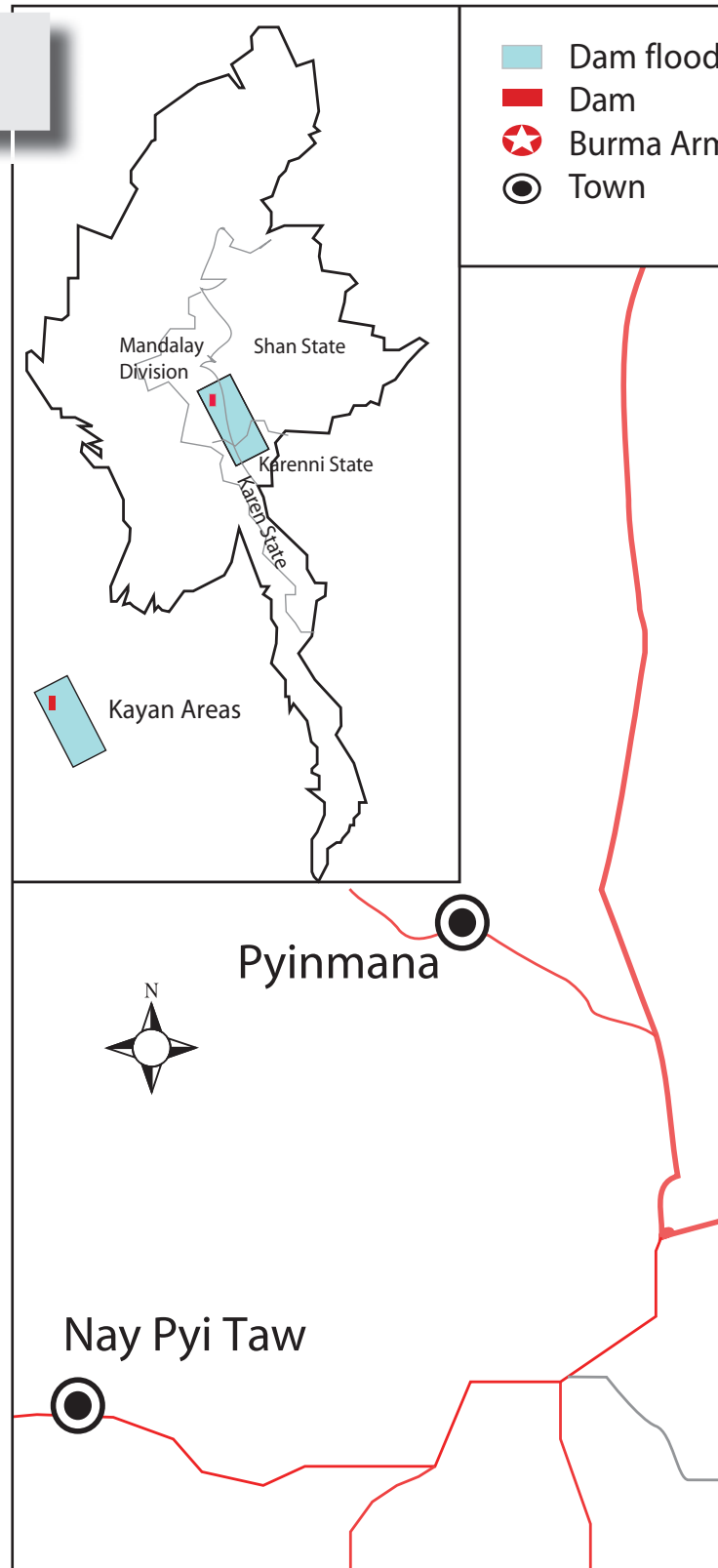
Based in London, Malcolm Dunstan is an engineering firm which specializes in the design and construction of Roller Compacted Concrete or RCC dams and has also consulted on Burma's Yeywa and Tasang dams. In 2009, Dr. Dunstan made his first visit to the Upper Paunglaung dam site to review developments of the project.

Yunnan Machinery and Export Company (YMEC)

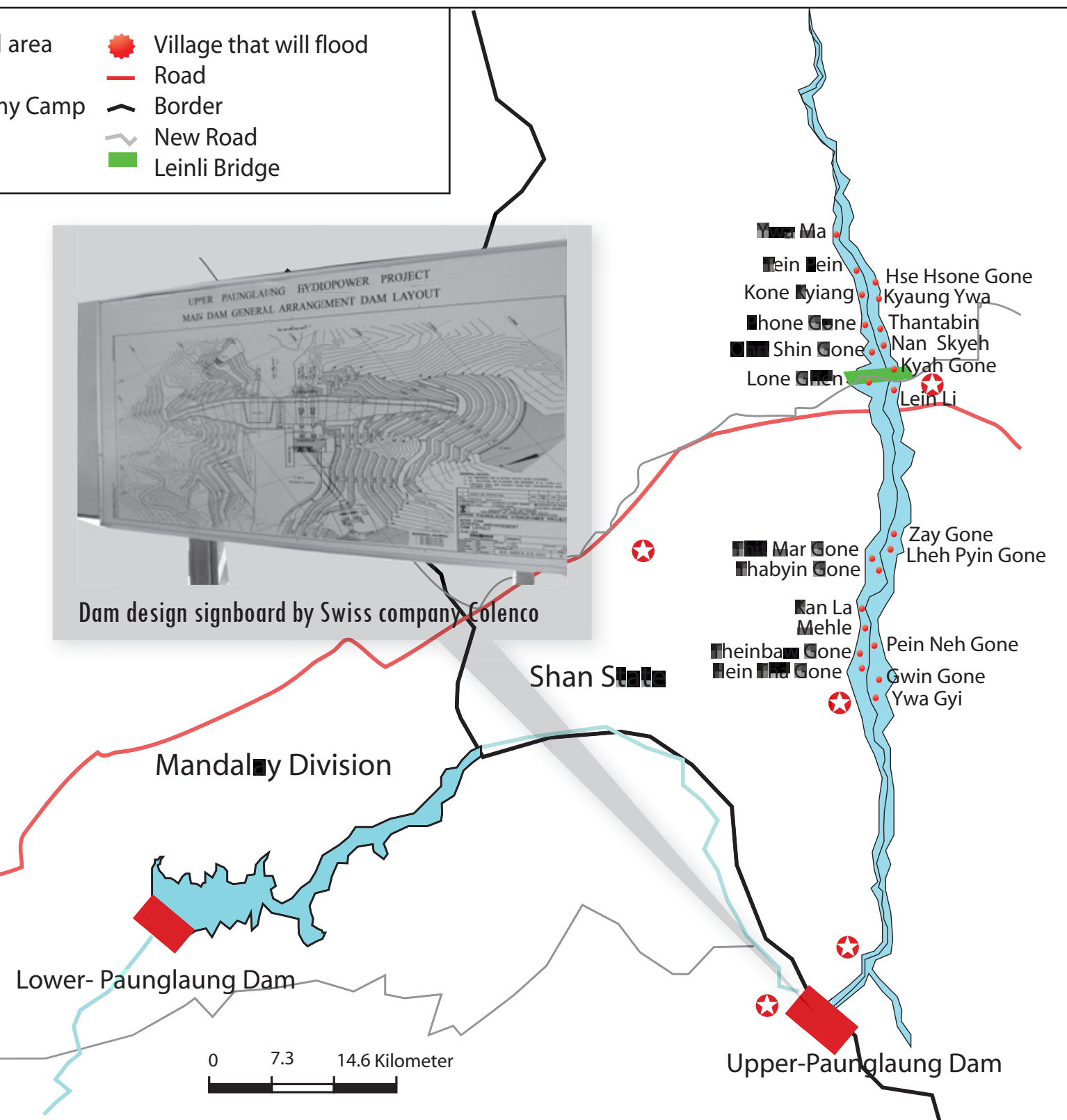
According to its website, YMEC signed a contract with Burma's the Department of Hydroelectric Power (DHP) under the Ministry of Electric Power for the Upper Paunglaung project in early 2006. YMEC has agreed to provide machinery and equipment for the Upper Paunglaung Dam under an 80 million USD contract.

China Exim Bank

China's Export-Import Bank provided over one billion Yuan (over US\$120 million) to build the Lower Paunglaung Hydropower Station. It is not known if the bank already has or plans to provide further funds for the Upper Paunglaung project.



The fertile plain along the river will be entirely submerged



Project details

Height: 103 meters

Installed capacity: 140 MW

Reservoir: 61 square kms

Usage: Supply Lower Paunglaung Dam,
powering Nay Pyi Taw

Expected completion: 2012

Impending Flood

Every year for the past three years, township authorities together with the Eastern Nay Pyi Taw Commander, Captain Yang Pyit, and experts have visited and held meetings four times per year in Thabyin Gone and Tein Pein village tracts. They show villagers on a project map which areas will be flooded after the dam is finished.

Villagers have been warned that they will have to move out and told to choose a new area for their village to settle higher up the nearby mountains. The authorities say they will help bulldoze the new area and after villagers move, each household will be given 50,000 kyat (less than US\$50). Even this paltry amount is not guaranteed; already in 2010, the Eastern Commander came and announced that instead of giving 50,000 kyat to each household, he would build a water tank for villagers. Even if the compensation is given, it is more an insult than a help.

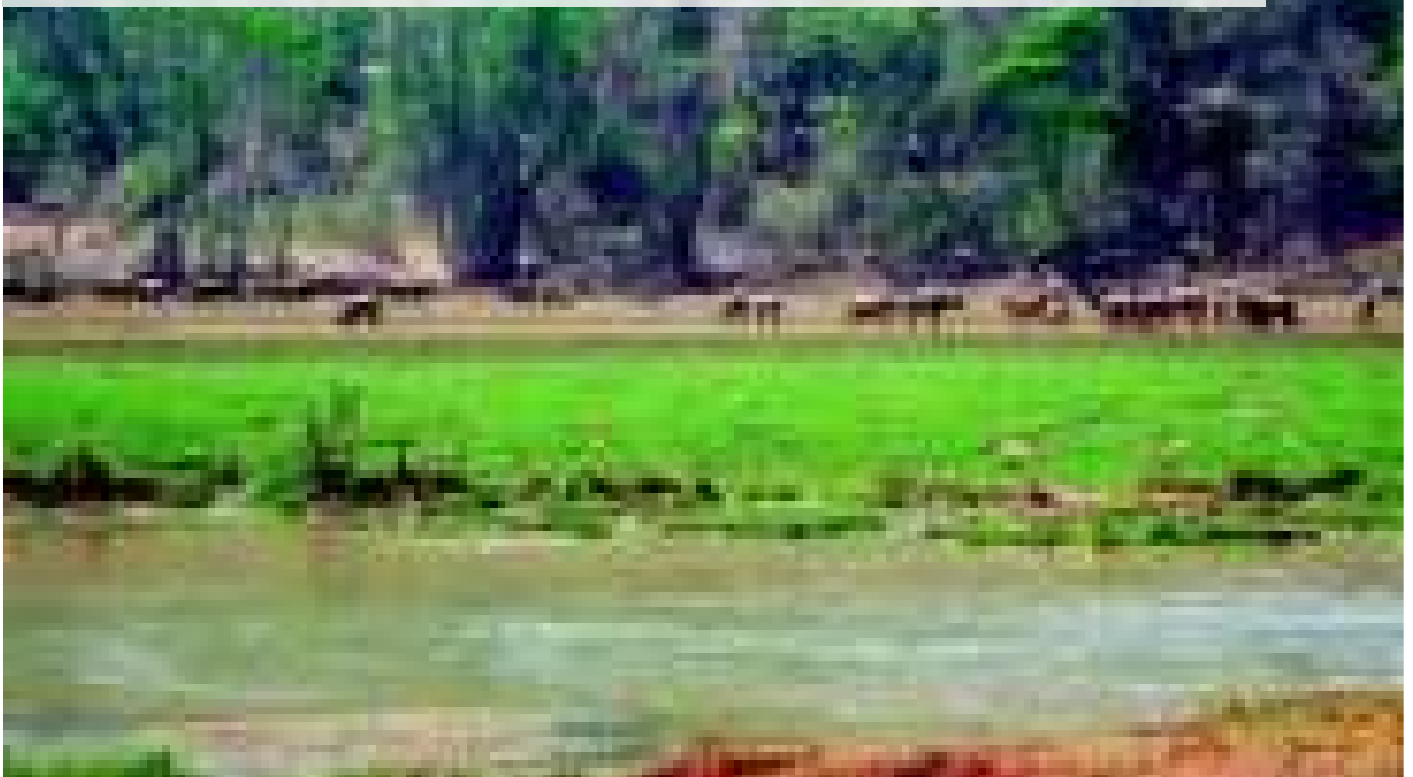
Until now, no village has moved, but all 23 villages have been informed that they must move out no later than October 2011.

A few villages have chosen a new place but the majority have no idea where to go and where are the best places to survive. The looming date has already affected developments in the villages as no one wants to improve their homes:

“Since 2004 I have been buying concrete to build my house. But now instead of losing those materials under water I donated them the monastery. Nobody dares to build a new house now and we are not sure where we will have to move.”

The villagers are facing relocation later this year but so far they have not been able to complain to the authorities because they do not know to whom they should complain and how to make their voice heard.

Over two thousand acres of prime lowland paddy field lands and thousands more in hillside gardens will be lost under the flood. Villagers will be forced to try to survive by expanding fields in the (less fertile) surrounding hills. This will contribute to an increase in deforestation as settlements are established.



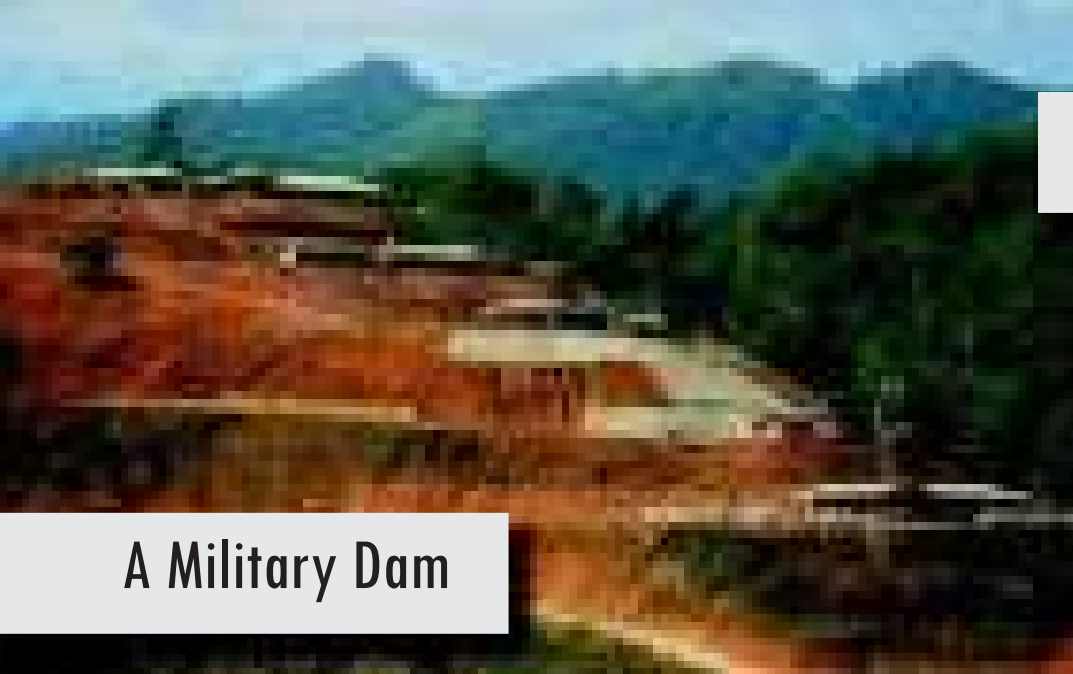


“50,000 kyat (US\$50) is nothing for us. Don’t say it will help us rebuild our house and plant new fields, it is not even enough to remove my current house!”

Villages that have to move for Upper Paunglaung Dam construction

No	Village Name	Households	Population
Tein Pein village tract			
1	Tanthabin	50	233
2	Kyah Gyi	30	150
3	Nan Skyeh	40	104
4	Ohn Shin Gone	55	263
5	Tein Pein	195	815
6	Ywa Mah	115	683
7	Kyaung Ywa	80	426
8	Kone Kyang	60	223
9	Hse Hsone Gone	57	218
10	Phone Gone	90	473
11	Lone Ghen	95	468
12	Lein Le	75	382

No	Village Name	Households	Population
Thabyin Gone village tract			
13	Zay Gone	60	275
14	Lheh Pyin Gyi	40	192
15	Thit Mar Gone	75	399
16	Thabyin Gone	129	520
17	Meh Le	10	55
18	Kan Lah	93	482
19	Pein Neh Gone	30	152
20	Theinbaw Gone	40	210
21	Hein Tha Gone	70	421
22	Gwin Gone	65	284
23	Ywa Gyi	116	570
TOTAL			7,998



Housing for engineers and military soldiers taking security for the dam

A Military Dam

As soon as the project was approved in 2004, Light Infantry Battalion 606 from Nay Pyi Taw was sent to secure the area. Abuses against the local population began immediately. Today there are two battalions based in the area, with four troop units guarding access to the dam site as well as patrol soldiers taking security duty in the surrounding villages.

Forced labour

In late 2006, Battalion 606 ordered villagers from Ywa Gyi, Thinbaw Gone, Heintha Gone and Gwin Gone to build temporary military camps on Myitwa Hill for the security of Nay Pyi Taw. Until today villagers have to collect and provide bamboo and leaves to these temporary military camps every year. They must also clear the weeds around the camps and all along the road from the bottom to the top of mountain. This work is done without pay and cannot be refused for fear of punishment.

Strict security and forced taxation

When the project is finished, the dam site and flood zone will be demarcated as Nay Pyi Taw, so the area is now very restricted. In Thabyin Gone and Tein Pein village tracts, villagers have had to build temporary security posts at every entry gate of each village. Two soldiers from Battalion 606 from Nay Pyi Taw and Battalion 122 from Pinlaung take weekly security duty at these village posts and every household has to give 1,000 kyat per month for the security fee.

Villagers must inform the authorities of any guest in the village or else the guest is fined 50,000 kyat and the house owner where the guest is staying is fined 10,000 kyat. No outside groups are allowed in the villages. One villager explained:

“No NGO or other organizations are allowed to do social work in this area. In 2007, the WFP (World Food Programme) was blocked from coming here. I think the block is linked to the dam project.”

Also for security of the project, since 2008 villagers are not allowed to practice their traditional hillside farming (Taung Ya in Burmese). Orders were issued against villages in Tein Pein tract in both 2008 and 2009 by Battalion 122, while the Pyinmana Township leader ordered villages Thabyin Gone tract in 2009 not to practice Taung Ya.



Exploiting workers

Approximately 250 workers from Pyinmana, Magway and Sagaing in central Burma are currently constructing the dam both by day and by night. The basic salary for the workers is 30,000 kyat (US\$30) per month. These workers received full payment in the first 3-4 months of work but later did not receive full payment or were paid late (10 days after the end of the month). The workers are not satisfied but do nothing because jobs in Burma are so difficult to get.



The Costs: Expected negative impacts

A destroyed economy

8,000 people in the Paunglaung River valley rely on agriculture as their main economic activity. Rich fertilized soil along the sides of the river's banks has allowed local people there to grow crops such as turmeric, chili, wet paddy, dry paddy, peanuts and also perennial crops such as bananas, oranges and tea. Lowland paddy farming in the valley is particularly productive, yielding more rice per acre than other areas. Crop traders from Pinlaung town come to buy seasonal crops. Yet this local economy will be destroyed by the dam, with no alternative means of survival provided.

Resource base exploited and flooded

Since 2009 logging in the area has increased, especially near Hi Thar Kong village. Gold mining that was previously done on a small scale near Htein Pein has increased; in 2009 a big company entered the area and began mining with large machines.

Due to the height of the dam, the forests along Paunglaung River will be submerged and the animals and their grazing grounds will be submerged. Wild animals such as deer, bears and turtles will lose their habitat. The dam will also decrease the number and variety of fish species, affecting local food security for thousands who rely on fishing to supplement their diet and incomes.




Kayan women from Paunglaung area wear their traditional dress

Community fabric torn apart

If the dam is built, the flooding of houses and lands will be devastating for the local people and subsequent generations. As there is no systematic plan for the resettlement of the 23 villages and there is no adequate compensation, the loss of land and lack of jobs will lead to further social problems, such as conflicts over land. Community schools and healthcare structures (such as proper sanitation infrastructure) will have to be re-built and as the priority will be on struggling to establish new farms, these sectors will suffer, impacting women and children the most. Sacred and historical places, such as pagodas and cemeteries, will be submerged and disappear forever, further obliterating their cultural foundations.

Photos: Women collect forest products for their domestic animals and harvest bamboo from groves in the plain area to cook soup for their families. The bamboo groves will be flooded by the dam while forest areas will degrade as villagers move into the mountains. Children are most vulnerable to the effects of displacement.



The World Commission on Dams recommends that local communities be the first to benefit from a dam project and that their standard of living should not only be maintained but improved.

Construction is going on now - call on companies to **STOP THE DAM!**

Recommendations

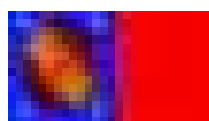
Foreign Companies: Withdraw all mega-development projects in Burma which lead directly to forcible land confiscation and other human rights abuses, destroy the environment, and do not bring any benefit to the local people.

Burmese Military Government: Stop building the Upper Paunglaung Dam immediately as currently there have been no public impact assessments of the project. At the same time it is going ahead with no appropriate compensation or resettlement process, without respect for local cultures, and with no plans to properly provide for the health and education needs of the impacted population.

International community and civil society organizations: Put pressure on the Burmese military government so that this dam project be ended immediately; pressure the companies involved to stop the project and review their policies; enforce sanctions on Burma's regime and stop investing in development projects that harm human beings and the environment.

Local communities: Seek ways to defend your rights and to protect your lands and environment.

www.kngy.org
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Published in May 2011

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Stop damming in War-Zones on Burma's Major Rivers:

A Briefer on Conflicts at Dam Sites in Burma by Burma Rivers Network

June 15, 2011

Salween Dams

Hatgyi

- After the November 7, 2010 election in Burma, conflict has greatly escalated along the entire border area, as many ceasefire groups have refused to come under the regime's control as Border Guard Forces. Many units of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, headquartered adjacent to the Hatgyi dam site, are now actively fighting the regime's troops, and together with the Karen National Union, now control large swathes of territory in the vicinity of the dam, and elsewhere in Karen State. Tens of thousands of refugees have fled since March this year, including hundreds from directly upstream of the dam site, due to shelling of villages, forced portering and other abuses against civilians.
- In two separate incidents in 2006 and 2007, Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) staffs were killed by grenade and landmine attacks at the dam site. EGAT's own experience in the area illustrates the existence of violence and conflict despite their claims otherwise. By proceeding with the dam project and calling for greater security EGAT is colluding with the Burmese military regime and exacerbating conflict and abuses in the area.

Upper Salween Dams

- On March 13, 2011, Burma's military regime broke its 22-year-old ceasefire with the Shan State Army-North, and mobilized over 3,500 troops to launch a fierce attack in central Shan State, shelling civilian targets, committing gang-rape, and displacing thousands of civilians. The fighting has now spread across northern Shan State, to areas adjoining the two planned upper Salween dam sites.

Ta Sang Dam

- May 9 2011, four Chinese engineers went missing at Ta Sang Dam Site while conducting a survey upstream of the dam site. The Burmese Military Regime sent 3 battalions to the area and to search for the Chinese Engineers. This has led to human rights violations including forced portering.

Ywathit Dams

- 27 December 2010, Karenni National Progressive Party troops attacked 20 government military trucks near Phruso Township, killing at least three persons including foreign technicians, according to the KNPP. No information was provided about the number of people injured in the attack. Speaking to The Irrawaddy Khu Oo Reh said, "We attacked the convoy because it brought the persons who can harm local people by building a dam. The convoy came from Loikaw, the capital of Karenni State, and was headed to the dam project in the Ywathit area of Bawlakhe Township, Karenni (Kayeh) State."
- June 2011, Burma Army deployed one battalion to take security for Chinese workers at Ywathit Dam.

Irrawaddy Dams

- On April 17, 2010, a series of at least 10 separate bombs exploded at the Myitsone Dam construction site. The blasts were reported to have injured at least one Chinese worker and destroyed several temporary buildings and vehicles owned by Asia World.
- Shortly after the explosions the Burmese regime arrested more than 70 local people. The Kachin Independence Organization denied any responsibility for the bombs and eventually most of the people jailed in an investigation were freed.
- March 2011 Kachin Independence Organization writes to Chinese government warning that civil war could break out if construction of the Myitsone Dam proceeds.

Dapein Dams

- Dapein Number 1 Dam has been shut down due to recent fighting between the Kachin Independence Army and the Burma Army. Workers from China have fled back home. As the regime has tried to reinforce its troops to the conflict area, people in Bhamo, Waing Maw, and Myitkyina townships are forcibly recruited to carry weapons and ammunitions for the Burmese troops.

It is impossible to carry out effective community participation in dam projects under this conflict situation. Abuses associated with the fighting such as forced portering and destruction of farmlands directly impacts local communities. Foreign investors cannot follow dam building standards and risk damage to their reputation by continuing these projects.

Burma Rivers Network therefore strongly urges Chinese, Thai, Indian and European investors and involved companies to immediately halt dam plans in Burma.

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Environmental Impact Study on Hydropower Development of Irrawaddy River: An Analysis from Burma Rivers Network

What was the study?

A 945-page preliminary biological assessment of seven planned dams on the Irrawaddy, N'Mai and Mali rivers in Kachin State, Burma collected baseline information on the biodiversity of flora and fauna in the catchment area of the dams over a period of 5 months from January to May 2009.

Who was involved?

All expenses of the study were funded by China Power Investment Corporation. A team of 80 scientists from Burma (from the Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association) and others from the Changjiang Institute of Surveying, Planning, Design, and Research (CISPDR) of China conducted the study.

What does it say?

The Myitsone dam should not be built:

"With experts, find an alternative option to avoid construction of Myitsone dam at the confluence." (p. 25)

"If Myanmar and Chinese sides were really concerned about environmental issues and aimed at sustainable development of the country, there is no need for such a big dam to be constructed at the confluence of the Ayeyawady River. Instead two smaller dams could be built above Myitsone to produce nearly the same amount of electricity. Hence respecting the Kachin cultural values which surpass any amount of the overall construction costs." (p. 40)

"The construction of the dam on the Irrawaddy should be avoided due to the changes in downriver hydrology which may affect navigation, riverine ecosystem and delta ecosystem and will lead to negative impacts on the economy." (p. 227)

The dams will have severe negative impacts, including on livelihoods, public health and safety:

"On account of construction of a cascade of dams in Kachin State there will be severe negative impacts on livelihoods and habitations of grassroots people of the region; disappearance of some wild rice varieties and their ancestors; disappearance and forever loss of the cultural heartland of Kachin people..." (p. 21)

The dams will threaten biodiversity:

"Ecoregions which are nationally important, regionally significant and globally outstanding will be directly affected by clearing and logging of the inundation areas and construction activities for a series of dams in Kachin State....Of particular concern are the loss and fragmentation of key ecosystems and the loss of key, endemic and endangered species of both flora and fauna....Definitely there will be negative impacts on potential of availability of traditional medicinal plants." (p. 21)

"There will be severe negative impacts on regionally significant and globally outstanding three ecoregions, one center of world plant diversity; severe impacts on key biodiversity areas and conservation corridors of Myanmar" (p. 21-22)

Downstream impacts to the whole Irrawaddy need to be examined, the river is vital to the country:

"Irrawaddy River is the most important lifeblood river in Myanmar. Millions of people are depending on Irrawaddy River for their livelihoods. It acts as a conduit of communication to over fifty million of people." (p. 1)

"The fragmentation of the Ayeyawaddy River by a series of dams will have very serious social and environmental problems not only at upstream of dams but also to very far downstream to the coastal delta. A longer and more comprehensive EIA investigation is strongly recommended in such a big and sensitive hydropower development which may very significant adverse impacts." (p. 2)

A social impact assessment must be conducted and decision makers should balance positive and negative aspects:

"Proper social impact assessment must be done before construction of each dam to know real impacts on livelihoods." (p. 29)

"The main drawback of this study is the lack of Social Impact Assessment. Systematic social impact assessment must be carried out by competent social scientists....Before approving the construction, the decision-makers are strongly urged to fairly balance between the negative and positive aspects of dams." (p. 62)

Affected people should be consulted and consent; local people are currently against the projects:

"The public should be disclosed about the hydropower dams and resettlement programs by having public meetings." (p. 26)

"The majority people of local races oppose construction of the dams especially Myitsone hydropower project. They consider the confluence as the cultural heartland of the Kachins." (p. 21)

"For the longevity of dams to be constructed in Kachin State, the opinion of grassroots people should be brought into due consideration." (p. 41)

The benefits of the project need to be shared equitably:

"There must be a fair and equitable sharing of benefits coming out from this hydropower development among the stakeholders concerned, including the people of Myanmar in general and Kachin people in particular." (p. 63)

The Environmental Impact Assessment should be publicly released:

"The main audience for this document is the people of Myanmar." (p.xxiii)

What is missing in the study?

- **Downstream impacts**, including assessments of river flows, water levels, flooding patterns, salt water intrusion into the Delta, fish habitats, and riverbank erosion are not studied. Baseline data on the river as a whole is also not collected.
- **Social and economic impacts** of the dams are not addressed.
- **Consultation with affected peoples** is not conducted.
- **Strong conclusions and recommendations** that ensure the concerns raised in the study are fully addressed are not included.

What has happened since the study?

Since the completion of the study in October 2009:

- Opposition to the dam projects by affected communities throughout the country has increased and numerous appeals to local and national authorities as well as Chinese companies and government have been ignored
- China Power Investment is speeding ahead with its dam plans, ignoring Chinese and international standards for conducting proper assessments
- Thousands of workers and equipment have been moved to Kachin State and construction has begun on the Chibwe and Myitsone dams
- A flawed compensation and resettlement process is being carried out using intimidation by military authorities; to date six villages have been forced to move. Villagers at the relocation camp do not have enough farmlands or water, suffer poor health and education facilities, are restricted in movement and are constantly under military surveillance
- Thousands of people are mining for gold near the Myitsone dam site in advance of construction, seriously polluting the Irrawaddy River
- The study has not been made publicly available; it is not clear if any further studies have been conducted as none have been made available
- The Kachin Independence Organization warned China's government in March 2011 that construction of the Myitsone Dam may result in civil war
- In June 2011 fighting broke out between Burma Army and the Kachin Independence Organization, resulting in the shutdown of China's Dapein hydropower station in Kachin State

Position of Burma Rivers Network

Water resource management must be based on principles of ecological sustainability and social justice. Affected communities - upstream and downstream - must be protected. To ensure this as well as transparency and accountability, national reconciliation and genuine democratization is needed in Burma.

Therefore the Burma Rivers Network urges that:

- These harmful dam projects on the Irrawaddy are immediately stopped and the river preserved for future generations.
- The economic, social, security and environmental impacts of dams throughout Burma be publicly disclosed.

Contact: burmariversnetwork@gmail.com

Save Burma's Rivers



Irrawaddy

Some of Asia's last free flowing rivers...

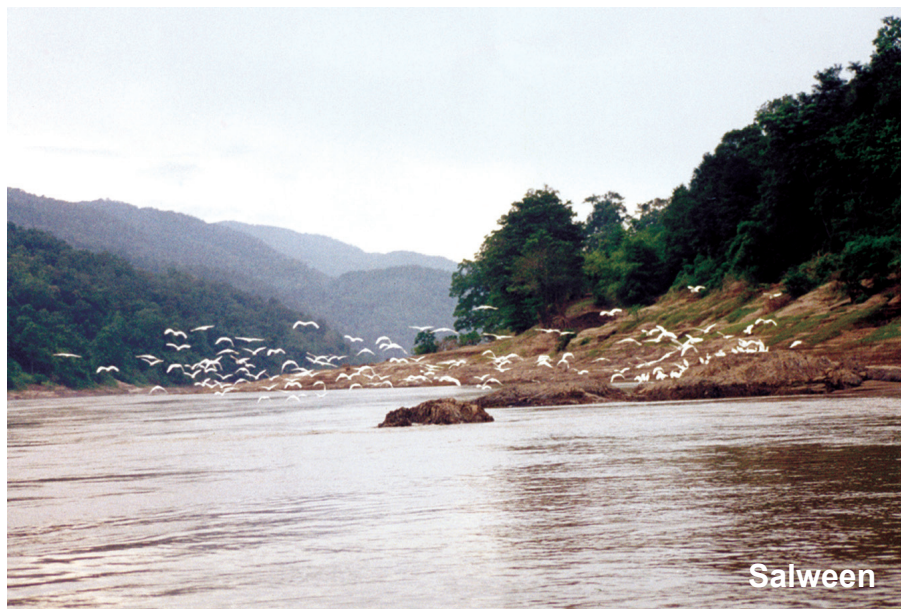
Supporting millions of livelihoods

Sustaining rich indigenous cultures and global biodiversity hotspots

Being sold off by a military dictatorship

Snapshot of Burma

- ▶ Ruled by military dictatorships for almost 50 years
- ▶ Rich in natural resources such as timber, minerals and gems
- ▶ Ethnic peoples fighting for their rights for decades
- ▶ Mass uprisings violently crushed in 1988 and 2007
- ▶ Planning sham elections in 2010 to establish puppet civilian government
- ▶ Export of resources to neighbors for military revenues
- ▶ Chronic energy shortages despite vast energy resources
- ▶ Among lowest health indicators in the world



Salween



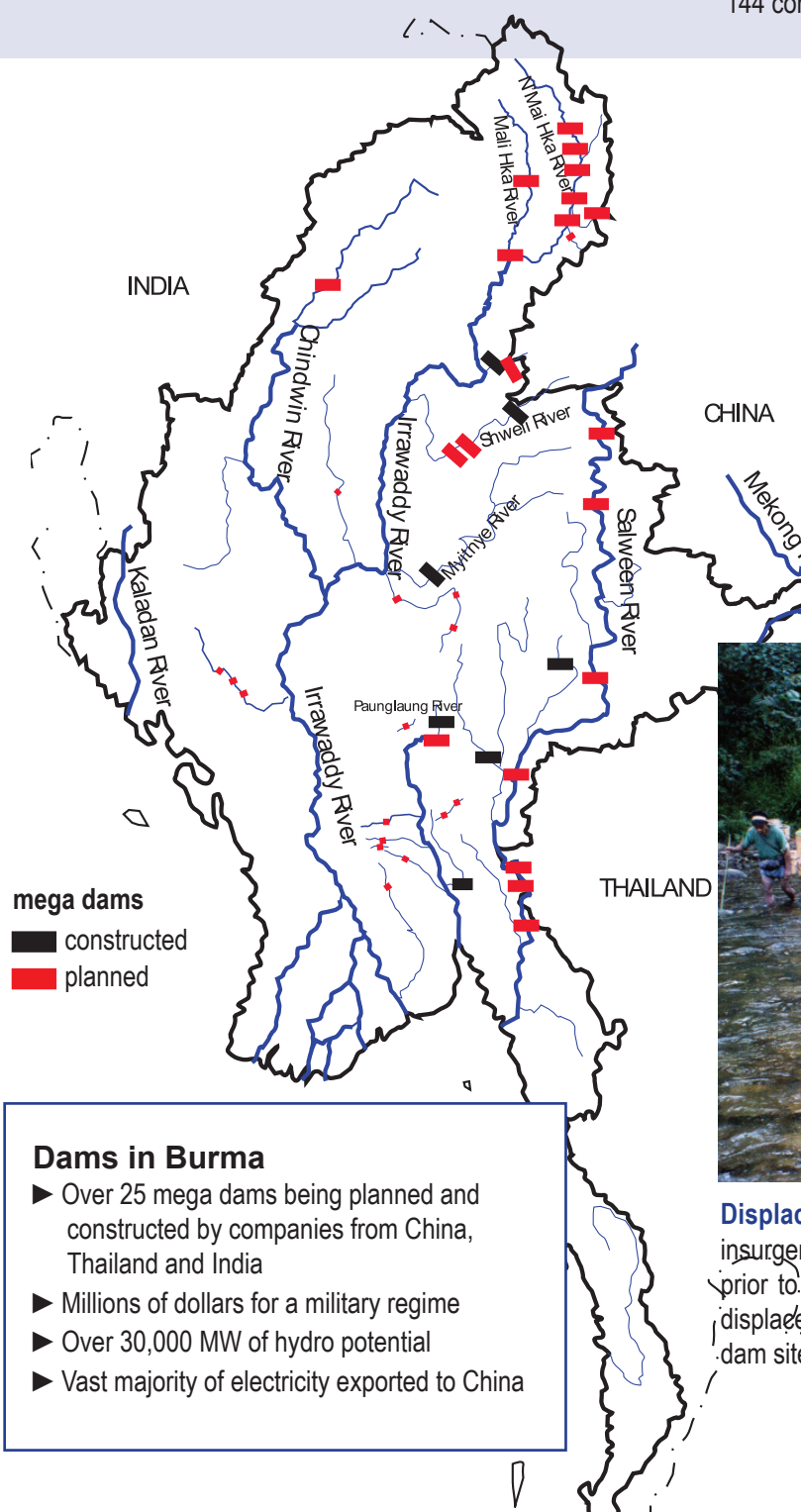


Photo AP

No participation The 2007 peaceful protests against drastic increases in fuel prices were violently cracked down on.



Militarization Burma Army troops mobilize to secure dam areas, leading to increased abuse of local people. Above troops from Light Infantry Battalion 144 conduct exercises near the Shweli 1 Dam.



Fueling conflict

Revenues from the sale of energy resources are the highest income earner for the regime's military expenditures. Most of the dams are in conflict-affected areas where ethnic peoples are fighting for their rights. Local populations are bearing the costs of the projects but not receiving any benefits. This is further fueling resentment and anger against the government and investors.



Photo FBR

Displacement The flood zones created by dams in addition to anti-insurgency campaigns and the "clearing" of a dam site area by the military prior to construction displace hundreds of thousands. Above internally displaced persons that were forcibly relocated from nearby the Salween dam sites seek a new home.



Destruction of culture

The Kayan people were forced to move for Burma's first dam and are now pushed off their lands for the Chinese-funded Paunglaung Dam which powers Burma's new capital. The homelands of the entire remaining Yin Ta Lai, who now number just 1,000, will be lost under the Weigyi Dam reservoir. At far left, Yin Ta Lai elders recount the history of their people.

Threat to biodiversity

The dams planned on the Irrawaddy and Salween rivers in Burma are located in areas with biodiversity of global value and which have not yet been properly surveyed. Dam reservoirs will inundate these biologically rich areas while the resulting human displacement will impact remaining habitats. The rivers themselves are also repositories of immense biodiversity; for example the Salween River has 143 fish species, 47 of them endemic.

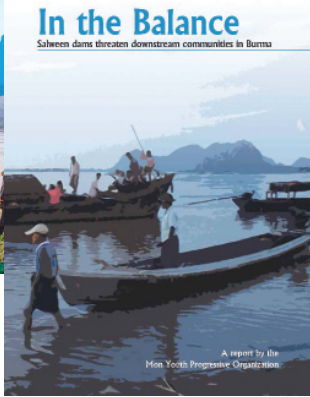
Loss of livelihoods

Burma's rivers support its agriculture upon which 60% of the population depend for their livelihoods. Fisheries are also an important industry. The Irrawaddy delta is literally the rice bowl of Burma yet the river is being dammed without any public impact assessments. A lack of land rights prevents farmers from protecting their lands from seizure and inundation.

Key Foreign Investors

Sinohydro
China Power Investment
China Southern Power Grid
China Gezhouba Group
HydroChina
Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand
National Hydroelectric Power Corporation
Colenco Power Engineering





BURMA RIVERS NETWORK

What we do

Research and monitor

BRN members monitor the status and impacts of harmful river development projects on the ground while at the same time researching project details, investors, and dam-building standards



Photo YingTzarm

Raise awareness

Using theater, workshops, media and educational materials, BRN members raise awareness about rivers and rights among affected communities



Photo YingTzarm

Seek solutions

BRN supports local action to seek solutions while also raising concerns with investors and civil society in neighboring countries

OUR CALL

Transparency, accountability, and the recognition of rights and social justice in energy development projects are needed in Burma. To that end, Burma Rivers Network encourages investors and civil society to promote healthy rivers in Burma by releasing and sharing information with affected peoples, ensuring that environmental and social standards are followed, and including affected peoples in the development process. All stakeholders are encouraged to utilize alternatives to large-scale hydropower development. Unless these basic provisions are ensured, all mega dam projects in Burma must be stopped.

Burma Rivers Network is comprised of organizations representing various dam-affected communities in Burma. We invite you to join us in our mission to protect the health and biodiversity of river ecosystems, and to protect the rights of communities negatively impacted by large-scale river development.

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DROWNING THE GREEN GHOSTS OF KAYANLAND



IMPACTS OF THE UPPER PAUNGLAUNG DAM IN BURMA

Drowning the Green Ghosts of Kayanland- Impacts of the Upper Paunglaung Dam in Burma

© Published in 2008 by the Kayan Women's Union

About the Kayan Women's Union

The Kayan Women's Union was set up in April 2003, with the aim of protecting Kayan women from oppression, gaining equal rights between men and women, and promoting the participation of Kayan women in the movement for human rights and democracy.

Contact

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Drowning the Green Ghosts of Kayanland can be viewed at www.salweenwatch.org

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Kayan area and dam reservoirs



Executive summary

Twenty six miles east of Burma's new capital Naypyidaw, a fertile valley with a population of over 3,500 is soon to be flooded to boost power to Burma's military leaders.

The Upper Paunglaung dam, being built with Chinese investment in the Pyinmana Hills of southern Shan State, will produce 140 MW of electricity and store water to increase the generating capacity of the Lower Paunglaung Dam, completed in March 2005, which currently powers Naypyidaw.

The reservoir of the 99-meter-tall dam will flood twelve villages and submerge over 5,000 acres of fertile farming land. The villagers, comprising some of the few remaining indigenous Kayan Lahta people, were never consulted about the dam plans, and have been offered no compensation. Instead, since 2004, when the dam construction began, they have faced an encroachment of Burma Army troops, and accompanying forced labour and other abuses.

The deployment of Burma Army troops along the Paunglaung River is in direct contravention of the ceasefire agreement reached between the main Kayan resistance army, the Kayan New

Land Party (KNLP), and the Burmese military regime in 1994, which had granted the KNLP control of this area. The regime has now seized most of the former KNLP territories in the Pyinmana Hills.

Ironically, the KNLP was first set up in 1964 in protest at the building of Burma's first major hydropower project, the Moby Dam, which flooded 114 villages, and the electricity from which was mostly sent to the capital Rangoon. Over forty years later, the Kayan people's rights are being abused in the same way, as they find themselves dispossessed of their lands and their resources being siphoned off at gunpoint, this time to the military regime's new capital Naypyidaw.

The Kayan Women's Union calls on the Burmese military regime and Chinese investors to immediately stop construction of the Upper Paunglaung Dam. There has been no transparency in the planning and implementation the project, and no informed consent by affected villagers. We also demand an end to the Burma Army invasion of Kayan territories and the grave human rights abuses being inflicted on our people.



Introduction

Nearly forty years ago, more than 8,000 people, including many Kayan, were forcibly displaced in Pekhon, southern Shan State, when Burma's first major hydropower project, the Moby Dam, was built by the ruling military regime.

114 villages, including the historical capital of Pekhon, were submerged under the dam's reservoir, as were thousands of acres of fertile farmland. Those displaced received pitiful compensation, and attempted to set up new farms along the banks of the reservoir, only to have them confiscated again to make way for six Burma Army battalions sent in to secure the area. Formerly prosperous rice farmers were driven into the hills west of Pekhon, and resorted to growing opium for survival, fuelling local addiction rates. As violence and abuses by Burmese troops escalated, many villagers fled to

Thailand, some ending up in refugee camps or, in the case of over a hundred Kayan-Padaung "long-necked" women and their families, in "human zoos" on display to tourists in Thailand.

None of the electricity produced by the dam benefited local communities, but was transmitted directly to Rangoon.

Today, the same nightmare is happening again, as the current military regime – the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) — proceeds with plans to build the Upper Paunglaung Dam in the western Kayan territories in the Pyinmana Hills. Once again, our peoples face forced displacement at gunpoint with no compensation. Once again, a river on which we relied for our livelihoods will be dammed to power a capital city, this time, the generals' military bastion Naypyidaw.

All of the communities along the Paunglaung Valley are now under the tight control of the SPDC military, and it was with great difficulty that we carried out research for this report during 2007. The aim of the report is to raise awareness among our own peoples as well as internationally about how the regime and the Chinese investors are trampling on the rights of our people in building this dam, and to call for an immediate end to the military invasion of our lands and the exploitation of our resources without local benefit.

The Kayan people

The Kayan people are ethnically related to the Karen and reside in southern Shan State, northern Karenni State and northern Karen State of Burma. Their population is around 200,000. They are comprised of four ethnic sub-groups, the largest being the Padaung (or Kayan La Hui, famed for the brass coils worn around women's necks, giving them an appearance of being "long-necked"). The smallest is the Kayan Lahta, numbering only about 5% of the total Kayan population.

The Kayan sub-groups speak different dialects of the Kayan language, but all share the same script, which uses the Roman alphabet. Kayan are traditionally hill-farmers with animistic beliefs. Nowadays many practice Christianity or Buddhism.

The Kayan Lahta

The Kayan Lahta are the smallest of the Kayan sub-groups, numbering only about 10,000 in total. They live mainly in southern Shan State, in Pekhon and Pinlaung townships, and in the mountain ranges east of Pyinmana in Mandalay Division.

Kayan Lahta wear distinctive white and red striped sarongs. Women traditionally wore brass rings coiled around their lower arms and lower legs. However, nowadays these have mostly been replaced by coils of rattan.

Kayan Lahta in traditional dress





The Paunglaung River

The Paunglaung river flows from its source in western Shan State through the south-west Shan plateau into the central Burmese plains east of Pyinmana, where it joins the Sittang, one of Burma's major rivers. Coursing through high mountains, its banks are largely uninhabited, except for a 14-mile stretch of flatland along the Paunglaung Valley, east of Pyinmana, home to numerous farming communities, including the indigenous Kayan Lahta.

The Paunglaung dams

Two hydropower dams have been planned on the Paunglaung River: the Lower and Upper Paunglaung dams. The former is already in operation, and is currently the largest hydropower project in Burma. The upper dam remains under construction.

The Lower Paunglaung Dam

The Lower Paunglaung Dam, which is located 10 miles east of Pyinmana, was completed in March 2005. The 131-meter-high dam has an installed capacity of 280 MW of electricity.

The dam was a joint project of the Irrigation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and the Hydroelectric Power Department of the Ministry of Electric Power (MEPE). China's Exim Bank provided over 1 billion yuan (over 120 million US\$) as loans to help build the power station, which was jointly built by the MEPE and the Yunnan Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Company (YMEC). YMEC provided the machinery and equipment for the dam under a US\$160 million contract. The deal was announced in 1998 as "China's largest export of complete sets of hydropower equipment to southeast

Asian countries, and also Yunnan's largest foreign trade project." (People's Daily Online, Sept 19 2000)

Power from the dam is fed directly through two 230 kilovolt power lines to the Pinyinmana power substation. While power was promised to other parts of Burma, such as Mandalay, once the Paunglaung dam was built, it appears that most of the electricity is being sent to Burma's new capital Naypyidaw.

There have also been reports that the dam has not been able to produce as much electricity as expected. A report by Mizzima news agency in April 2006 revealed that the water levels in the reservoir were so low that only two of the four 70 MW turbines were functioning.

The Upper Paunglaung Dam

The site of the Upper Paunglaung Dam is located 26 miles east of Pinyinmana, 15 miles above the Lower Paunglaung Dam, and just a few miles from the southern end of the Paunglaung Valley.

This means that the entire Paunglaung Valley, the only fertile plain along the river, will be entirely submerged by the dam's reservoir once the dam is built.

The MoU to implement the Upper Paunglaung Dam project was signed on September 1, 2005, by the Hydroelectric Power Department (HPD) of the Ministry of Electric Power and the Yunnan Machinery and Export Co. Ltd (YMEC) of China. YMEC agreed to provide machinery and equipment worth US\$80 million for the project, which would be undertaken jointly by the HPD and YMEC. The German company FOSCE Consulting Engineers is also involved in the dam construction.

The upper dam will be a 99 meter tall roller-compacted concrete dam, installed with two 70 MW turbines. Increased water storage at this upper dam is also aimed to increase the power generating capacity of the Lower Paunglaung Power Plant. The dam is slated for completion in December 2009. Preparations for construction of the dam began at the site in early 2004.

*Excavation work for the
Upper Paunglaung Dam
Photo from YMEC website*



Flood areas of Upper and Lower Paunglaung Dams



Impacts of the Upper Paunglaung dam

Displacement

The fertile Paunglaung Valley has been inhabited by indigenous Kayan Lahta people for over a thousand years. (See box: Legend of the White Elephant). There are currently twelve villages in the valley, with a total population of over 3,500 (see Table 1). The villagers are all subsistence farmers. There is no paved road between the villages along the river; villagers commonly travel by ox-cart, or use small motor boats to

travel along the river.

According to the height of the dam, it is calculated that the reservoir of the Upper Paunglaung dam will stretch for the entire length of the Paunglaung Valley, submerging all the villages along the valley. The sacred graveyards of each village and three Buddhist pagodas in Gwelon, Thinbawgon and Ywagyi villages will be flooded.

Table 1: Villages to be flooded

	Village	Household	Population	Ethnicity
1	Ywagyi	116	580	Kayan Lahta, Shan, Burman
2	Gwelon	83	515	Shan, Burman
3	Hinthagon	47	235	Burman
4	Thinbawgon	43	215	Shan, Pa-o, Burman
5	Kanhla	80	400	Kayan Lahta, Pa-o
6	Thabyegon	87	435	Shan, Pa-o, Burman
7	Hlaingli	32	160	Kayan Lahta, Pa-o, Burman
8	Shangon	48	240	Shan, Burman
9	Lunke	50	250	Kayan Lahta, Pa-o, Burman
10	Zaygon	33	165	Shan, Pa-o, Burman
11	Phogon	38	190	Shan, Pa-o, Burman
12	Lebyingyi	37	185	Shan, Burman
	Total	694	3570	

Note: The Kayan Lahta comprise approximately 25% of the population



Traditional Kayan homes and Buddhist pagodas like these will be lost under the flood waters



Legend of the White Elephant

Kayan Lahta elders recount to this day a legend that establishes their royally-bestowed claim over the Kayan territories of southern Shan State.

During the reign of King Anawratha in Pagan, in the 11th Century, one of his white elephants died. An order to search for a replacement was given out, and his courtiers were advised by the royal astrologers to travel to the Kayan Lahta region of southern Shan State.

After passing along the Paunglaung river, the search party found elephant droppings. They then came across a Lahta woman tending her hill farm, who told them that a white elephant grazed daily nearby. The group tried to catch it, but to no avail. They entreated the woman to help them catch the animal. She was able to do so, but it refused to follow the group back to the palace. The courtiers again entreated the woman to help them bring the elephant with them. The woman complied, but after some days, she was unable to keep on walking.

Likewise, the white elephant also stopped walking. The courtiers then ordered that the Lahta woman be carried on a stretcher to the palace.

In this way, the white elephant was eventually presented to the king. To show his gratitude, the king asked the woman to make a wish. Unable to understand the language, the woman kept quiet. The king then placed a pile of jewelry before her, but she paid no interest to it. The king asked again what she wanted. She then took out a knife and struck the palace ground with it thrice. The royal astrologers explained to the king that this must mean she was asking for land. The king then demarcated a settlement area in southern Shan State for the people of the woman who had brought him the white elephant. The Kayan Lahta have settled in this area from that time to the present.

No informed consent, no compensation

The villagers living in the Paunglaung Valley were never consulted about the building of the Upper Paunglang dam, and only learned of the construction when the dam-site was declared off limits and Burma Army troops sent in to guard the area in 2004.

However, in early 2007, the village heads from Thabyegon village tract were taken by local Pinlaung township officials to Hopon township (40 miles from their current homes), and shown the place where they would have to move when their villages were flooded by the dam. No mention was made about compensation for their farms which would be flooded.

“The village heads were taken and shown a location in Hopon township where we were supposed to move to. The place was on bald hills with stretches of grassland. How can we fend for our subsistence in such surroundings? Nobody has any

intention of moving to such a place.”
(Interview 6)

Local villagers interviewed in April 2007 mentioned that they dreaded having to move from their homes and set up new lives elsewhere.

Usually, during April, villagers take advantage of the dry season to repair and re-thatch their houses. However, no one could be seen doing so during the 2007 dry season.

A villager from Hsin Kwin explained: *“Look. Actually it is the time to build or patch the houses but as you see now, there is no one patching or building his house. There used to be the sound of hammering going on all over the village, but these sounds have all gone during the past three years. If we didn’t have to move away, our houses would look smart and bright. It is all due to the coming eviction.”*
(Interview 11)

By early 2008, some villagers in the valley had begun moving out of their homes and relocating to other areas of Shan and Karenni States.

“We just cannot imagine how to begin our lives again. Moving away means we must start all over again back from square one, and we will certainly have to struggle.”
(Interview 7)





Impacts on livelihoods

Farming

The fertile alluvial land on the riverside is where most of the local inhabitants cultivate their crops, particularly wet paddy, irrigated by the streams running into the river. Farms get a high yield of 80 to 100 baskets of paddy per acre. Locals also cultivate cash crops such as potato, peas, garlic and onion in the dry season. There are also many fruit trees such as mango, jack fruit, coconut and djenkol. Turmeric is also widely grown on the hillsides as a cash crop, which is sold in Pinlaung – one day's journey away by motorized tractor.

Once the Upper Paunglaung dam is built, not only will the local people lose their homes, but also their fertile fields. The total acreage of farmlands which will be submerged by the dam's

reservoir is estimated to be over 5,300 acres.

Table 2: Farmlands to be flooded

No.	Village	Farmland [acres]
1	Ywagyi	893.2
2	Gwgon	639.1
3	Hinthagon	361.1
4	Thibawgon	331.1
5	Kanhla	616.0
6	Thabyegon	669.9
7	Hlaingli	246.4
8	Shangon	369.6
9	Lunke	385.0
10	Zaygon	254.1
11	Lebyingyi	292.6
12	Phogon	284.9
	Total	5,343.8

Fisheries

The Paunglaung River is the home and breeding ground of various species of rare and nutritious fish. Most local people catch fish for their own consumption. Fish are also central to the traditions of the Kayan Lahta people, who make offerings of fish to the spirit guardians of the forest before sowing paddy.

Many species of fish used to migrate up from the Sittang River and into the Paunglaung tributary and breed in its feeder streams and creeks. Since the completion of the Lower Paunglaung Dam three years ago, villagers have noticed that various fish species have decreased, including catfish and eels. Once the Upper Paunglaung Dam is built, they expect the fish population will decrease even further.

Forest products

The Kayan Lahta have a close dependence on the forest. The forests seasonally provide such resources as fruits, vegetables and other produce for both people and animals alike. Forest produce such as resin and honey are key ingredients of traditional local medicine. Various species of rare orchids, mushrooms, and wild djenkol beans grow in the forests.

Once the dam is built, remaining forests along the Paunglaung will be submerged, and villagers displaced by the reservoir will also be forced to clear further areas of forest to establish new homes on higher ground. Increased military deployment in the area to provide for security for the dam once it is built, is also likely to lead to further destruction of the forest as the troops clear land and cut down trees to build new military bases.

“At the moment we are well endowed with our farmlands. Most people rely on wet farms along the riverside. The whole stretch of land along the river banks serves as farmlands,



while hill paddy and turmeric are grown on the hills. If our wet farms are flooded, we will lose our means of subsistence.” (Interview 13)



Above photos: electric lines and new housing in Naypyitaw

Below photos: inside the control room at Lower Paunglaung Station

Burma's new capital: lit-up in isolation

On November 6, 2005, at the astrologically auspicious time of 6.37 am, civil servants in Rangoon were forced to begin moving 320 kms north to the new capital of Naypyidaw, meaning "Royal City," a sprawl of half-constructed buildings outside the town of Pynmana, in Mandalay Division.

The exact reasons for the relocation remain unclear. Some believe the regime hoped the new inland location would provide greater protection from foreign invasion. Others speculate that the military rulers wanted to be in a better

strategic position to control the ethnic states. Many are convinced that the move was guided by the generals' fortune-tellers.

While most civil servants have been reluctant to move to the isolated new capital, one benefit the new location offers over the old capital is 24-hour electricity. Rangoon continues to suffer from lengthy blackouts, but Burma's military rulers have ensured that all available power, including from the Lower Paunglaung Dam, is being fed to Naypyidaw to keep it lit up around the clock.

Increased abuses by the Burma Army

Troop deployment to secure the dam site

Up until 2004, there had been no Burma Army troops permanently stationed along the Paunglaung valley. Only occasionally Burmese troops stationed at temporary camps south of the valley would patrol along the valley. This was in accordance with the ceasefire signed between the Kayan New Land Party (KNLP) and the regime in 1994, which granted KNLP control over the valley and surrounding territories in southwest Shan State. However, in February 2004, troops from SPDC Light Infantry Battallion 606, which had been stationed at Sinkwin, four miles east of the Upper Paunglaung dam site, set up a new camp called Kywe Yoe (“Buffalo Bone”) on a mountain at the southern end of the Paunglaung valley six miles north of the dam site.

Forced labour around new military base

In setting up the new camp on the Kywe Yoe mountain top, SPDC troops, led by Major Kyaw Lwin, forced civilians from the villages of Sinkwin, Ywagyi, Gwewon and

Thinbawgon to come and clear the land all around the new camp from the top of the mountain down to the bottom. They were forced to work without payment, under threat of a cash fine or detention. Some villagers had to do the work even when they were ill, and some died of malaria caught during the work. Major Kyaw Lwin oversaw the forced labour, which went on for two months.

Forced into government militia

Following the establishment of a permanent SPDC base in the Paunglaung valley, members of all the villages in Thabyegon tract along the valley were forced in 2005 to begin serving in a local pro-government militia. The militia have had to take it in turns to stand sentry around their villages at night, and, together with the local members of the government-sponsored Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) have been forced to monitor the movements of anyone traveling in the area. Names of all home-stay guests had to be reported to the authorities, or else a cash fine of 10,000 kyats was exacted.

“Twenty people, both young and old, male or female, from each village were forced to clear the bushes. No farm tools or food were provided. We had to clear thick dense bushes, where snakes and mosquitoes were plentiful. Sick people were not allowed to rest. Some died of malaria. We had to do their work the whole year round .Our children were starving. It is as if we were in hell.” (Interview 8)

Reneging on the Kayan ceasefire agreement

In October 2005 the SPDC informed the KNLP that the mountains east of Pyinmana were to come under SPDC control, and that the KNLP should withdraw its troops from villages south and southwest of the Paunglaung Valley.

This order was in direct contravention of the 1994 ceasefire agreement, and the KNLP did not immediately withdraw their troops. Shortly afterwards, in November 2005, SPDC troops from LIB 141 opened fire on the Kayan village of Bawkahta, killing a KNLP policeman and injuring a woman and child.

The incident coincided with the move of the SPDC to their new capital at Pyinmana. The SPDC were evidently intent on driving out the KNLP to ensure the safety of their new capital, as well as to secure the new dam on the Paunglaung. Unwilling to provoke further bloodshed, the KNLP then withdrew its troops from most of the villages to the southwest of the Paunglaung Valley.

Following the death of KNLP Chairman U Shwe Aye in August 2006, the SPDC troops began patrolling even more frequently the villages from which the KNLP had withdrawn, and established permanent bases in the villages of Ledukaung, Bawkatha and Bawlake, south of the dam-site. This in turn has led to increased forced labour for the villagers in the area:

“The SPDC IB # 85 took control of our Alaechaung-Kinlaik village tract and also other village tracts. They called up one person from every household and made us fence their base camp, clean up the kitchens, and in and around the barracks. We also had to fetch roofing leaves, thatch and bamboo to patch up the barrack roofs and also firewood. (Interview 3)

“As for portering, we had to do it twice or thrice a month, for one day and night? We usually had to carry rice supplies, ammunition and other military equipment.” (Interview 5)

As a result of these increased abuses by the Burma Army, hundreds of Kayan families have fled to the Thai-Burma border.

“Every village in our Thabyegon village tract must serve in the militia. One person is called up from every seven households. As nobody wishes to do the job, we have to choose one by casting lots and then the six individuals who escape the dreaded lot give 10,000 kyats each to the one chosen. But still we have to sit sentry watch every night, even after we have already given the militia fee! I have no idea of why we have to do this! It’s really depressing.” (Interview 5)

The Kayan New Land Party: spawned from the Moby Dam

In 1963 a group of local leaders in Pekhon Township, southern Shan State, formed an Anti-Dam Construction Committee to oppose the building of the Moby dam, which was going to flood their homes and farms. When repeated appeals to government officials were met with threats of arrest, the group decided to go underground. On August 8, 1964, the Kayan New Land Party was set up, led by a Kayan student dissident called Ngai Kayan Htan a.k.a Khun Shwe Aye, with the aim of opposing the military dictatorship and demanding rights for the Kayan peoples. Many Kayan people from Pekhon who would be impacted by the Moby Dam joined the KNLP. The KNLP's main area of operation was in Pekhon and Pinlaung townships of southern Shan State.

Following increased Burma Army oppression of the Kayan peoples, the KNLP in 1994 agreed to a ceasefire with the Burmese military regime. The KNLP were granted military and economic control of the mountainous region east of Pyinmana. However, during recent years, this area has been progressively encroached upon by the regime's troops.

Forced labour to build new road to dam site

In order to transport equipment and workers to build the Upper Paunglaung Dam, a new road has been excavated through the hills directly from the Lower Paunglang dam site. Villagers in the surrounding areas have been forced to build stretches of the road. This included Kayan villagers from Ye Pu Taung Myint, and Upper Boe Mar, who were forced to build the road beginning in March 2006.

Restrictions on hill farming

Beginning in early 2007, the military authorities gave the order to villagers from Sinkwin that they were not allowed to plant rice on the hills east of the Upper Paunglaung dam site. This has caused great difficulties for these villagers, who rely on their hill rice for subsistence. One villager complained:

“When we were cutting our hill farms [at the dam site] they did not say anything. Only now (March 2007) the order was issued not to burn our hill farms. What shall we do to fend for our subsistence? Will we have to plant bananas instead of cultivating hill rice?” (Interview 2)



Environmental impacts

The Paunglaung River flows through the Kayah-Karen Montane Rainforests, one of 200 areas in the world recognized by the World Wildlife Fund as outstanding examples of biodiversity. Some areas in the Paunglaung region are still covered with impenetrable dense forest, comprised of dipterocarps, teak and other species.

While elephants no longer roam along the Paunglaung river, other large wild mammals including wild buffalo, gaurs, bears, tigers, leopards, wild boars, mountain goats and deer still inhabit the region. Other small mammals such as foxes, hares, wild cats, hogbadgers, otters, porcupines and moles can be seen along the river bank along with such reptiles as lizards and snakes of various species.

Wild fowl can be seen at all times in the forest, including peacocks, pheasants, owls, hornbills, vultures, crows, woodpeckers, emerald doves, partridges, parrots and bulbuls. Other species such as snipe, little egrets and sarus cranes can be seen along the riverside, while birds as crows, pigeons, sparrows and myna birds are plentiful around the villages.

The reservoir of the dam will drown out the habitats of many of these species, and further reduce the forest cover of Burma, already fast diminishing as a result of unregulated logging and encroachment for large commercial plantations.

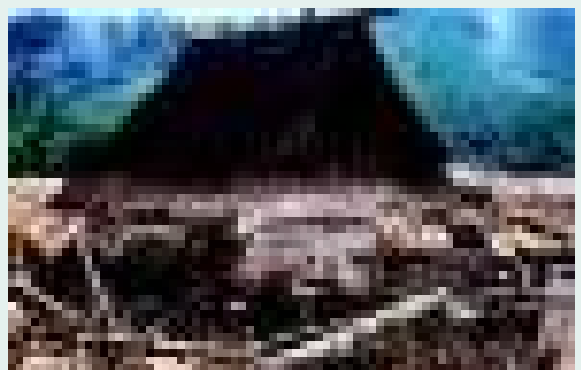
Traditional Kayan respect for nature

The Kayan traditionally worship and pay offerings to local spirit guardians of the mountains, rivers and creeks, as well as worshipping a creator god. It was believed that faithful practice of these beliefs together with the observance of traditional codes of conduct would ensure a harmonious existence. The Kayan used to select a suitable individual from a specific clan, to make offerings to the particular spirits.

The Kayan believe that by making offerings to the guardian of spring holes, abundant spring water will provide man and animals with clear and clean water. Similarly, profuse rainfall will result from offerings made to guardians of mountain regions, refreshing the farms and hills, and nourishing forests. Cutting down a big tree is taboo, as spirits reside in them, and can result in derangement or even death. Tree groves would be assigned to a village, clan or family, who would maintain and make offerings to them. Trees could only be cut sparingly for house use or for fuel. Clearing new farm plots was particularly prohibited, and villagers were obligated to plant on existing farm plots in rotation every three years.



Raising “Kay To Bo” post during traditional Kayan festival



Traditional Kayan house made from natural materials



Conclusion and Recommendations

The Kayan Women's Union is strongly opposed to the Upper Paunglaung Dam project. Since the project began four years ago, we have seen an influx of Burma Army troops into villages in the area, and increased human rights abuses against local communities. 3,500 villagers living in the potential flood zone are facing forcible displacement, and the inundation of over 5,000 acres of farmland, as well as sacred graveyards and Buddhist shrines.

The dam will bring no benefit to local people, but will simply generate income for the regime and Chinese investors. The electricity produced will be prioritized for the military elite and not for local development.

The Kayan people have already

experienced the devastating consequences of mass displacement from hydropower development, when the Moby Dam was built nearly forty years ago. Now, we are facing the same fate once again, with the building of the Upper Paunglaung dam.

The Kayan Women's Union therefore urgently calls for:

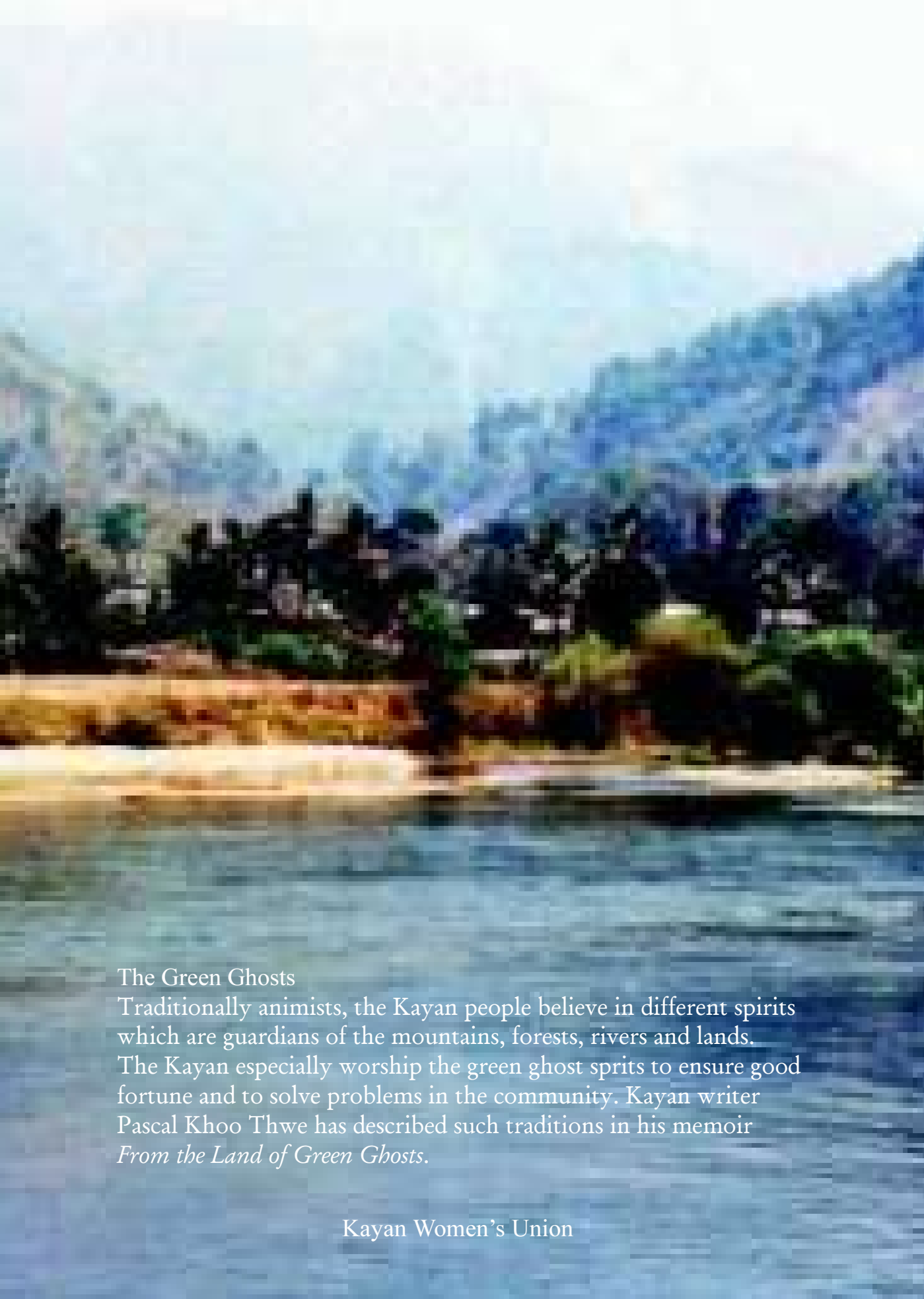
1. An immediate termination of the Upper Paunglaung dam project, which is being implemented without any transparency or local consent, and which will have serious social and environmental impacts.
2. The withdrawal of Burma Army troops from the Kayan regions, and an end to all the human rights abuses committed by these troops.

Table 3: Interviews

No.	Sex	Age	Occupation
1	F	25	teacher
2	F	57	farmer
3	F	55	Kayan official
4	M	56	farmer
5	M	57	farmer
6	M	35	Kayan official
7	M	60	farmer
8	M	58	boat driver
9	M	25	farmer
10	M	57	trader
11	M	57	farmer
12	M	55	farmer
13	F	46	farmer
14	F	37	health worker
15	M	41	health worker
16	M	58	accountant
17	M	52	driver
18	M	38	health worker



Villagers cross the Paunglaung River



The Green Ghosts

Traditionally animists, the Kayan people believe in different spirits which are guardians of the mountains, forests, rivers and lands. The Kayan especially worship the green ghost spirits to ensure good fortune and to solve problems in the community. Kayan writer Pascal Khoo Thwe has described such traditions in his memoir *From the Land of Green Ghosts*.

Kayan Women's Union

STOP the Dam Offensive against the Karenni

The Karenni, one of Burma's main ethnic groups, have been suffering for over half a century from military aggression and abuses by successive ruling juntas. Now they are facing a new threat: the damming of rivers across their state by Chinese investors.

In January 2010, the state-owned Datang Corporation of China signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Burma's regime to build three dams in Karenni State, including a 600 Megawatt dam on the mainstream Salween, and two others on its tributaries, the Pawn and Thabet rivers.

Plans by Chinese and Thai companies to build dams on the Salween in Burma have been highly controversial for years for their human costs and potential environmental impact. The seven planned dams are all sited in conflict zones; dam workers have been killed by land mines and artillery. Military offensives in the area of the southernmost planned dam have recently caused thousands of refugees to flee to Thailand.

In Karenni State, engineers guarded by armed soldiers are currently surveying for both the Ywathit Dam on the Salween and the Pawn River Dam. The Pawn Dam is likely to be built first to power construction at Ywathit and will be devastating for the Yintale people who live along the Pawn River and now number just 1,000.

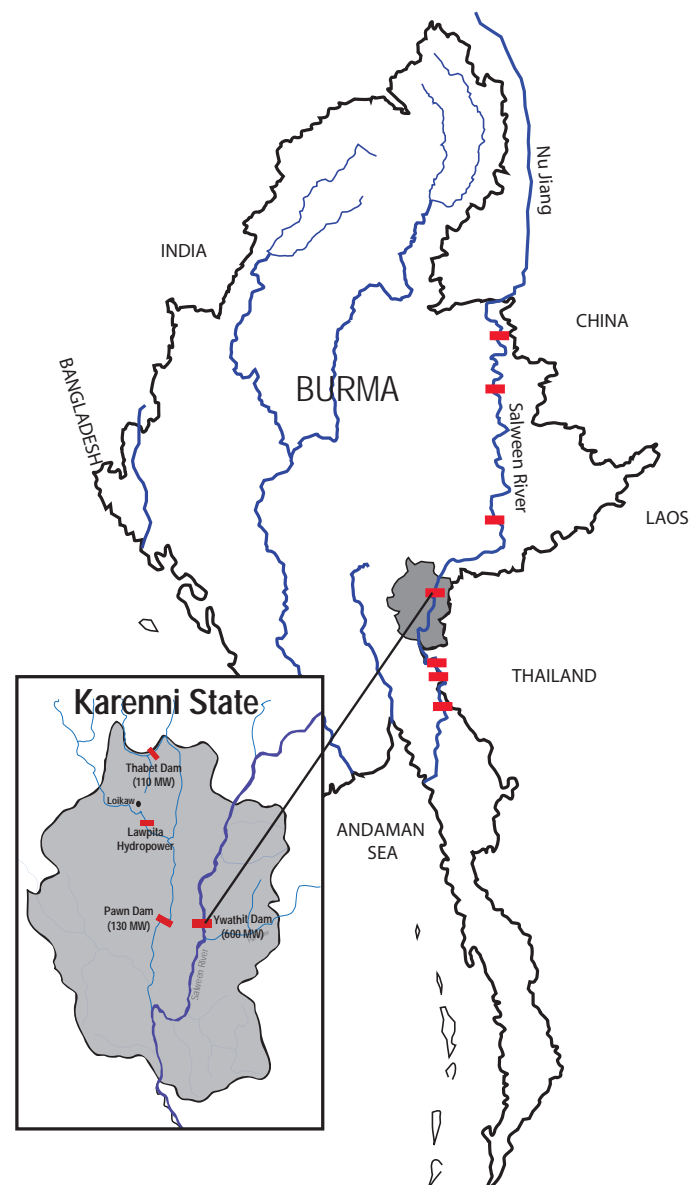
Planned Dams in Karenni State

Ywathit Dam: 600 MW

(Locally known as Kyauk Kyin or "Red Stone")

Pawn Dam: 130 MW

Thabet Dam: 110 MW



6 concerns about dams in Karenni State



1

Fueling conflict and instability

The dams will further fuel conflict as more troops are being brought in to guard the projects and staff. The area remains unstable: armed resistance groups continue to operate, and divisions exist among ethnic "Border Guard Forces" (BGF) that have recently been brought under the Burma Army.

Amid this situation and given the Karenni experience with hydropower to date, the dams will increase resentment and animosity against Burma's regime and dam investors. In December 2010 a convoy of Burma Army soldiers escorting engineers to the dam site was attacked and three people were reportedly killed.

Civil War and Forced Relocation

Burma's ethnic peoples have been struggling for equal rights for decades and their call for a genuine federal system of government has been denied until today. Fighting between Karenni resistance forces and successive Burmese military rulers has been continuing for decades.

The Burma Army has employed anti-insurgency programs against civilians in Karenni State which have caused widespread internal displacement, including a large-scale forced relocation in the Salween valley in 1996. A total of 212 villages, at least 37,000 people, were displaced, largely from the potential flood zones of the newly planned dams. Driven into overcrowded relocation sites, many hid in the jungle, or fled to Thailand as refugees.



2

Forging ahead in secret

Although engineers are currently surveying the dam sites, the local populations have not been informed of the dam projects and no one is allowed to go near the sites. No environmental, social, or health impact assessments have been disclosed for the Ywathit or Pawn dams and no baseline data about the Salween in Burma has been established due to the ongoing conflict.

Lawpita: first bitter experience of hydropower development

Lawpita, the first large-scale hydropower project built in Burma, forced over 12,000 people from their homes. Thousands of Burma Army soldiers came in to secure the project, resulting in abuses against the local population including forced labor, sexual violence, and extrajudicial killings. Today there are an estimated 18,000 landmines surrounding the power plants and pylons. Water use was prioritized for the power plants, causing water shortages and destructive floods that destroyed crops. Despite these costs, still today eighty percent of the local population has no access to electricity, as most is sent to central Burma.

It is unknown where the electricity from new dams in Karenni State will be sent. Given the trend of other dam projects in Burma, it is feared that most will be sold to Thailand or China, or prioritized for Burma's military and its cronies.

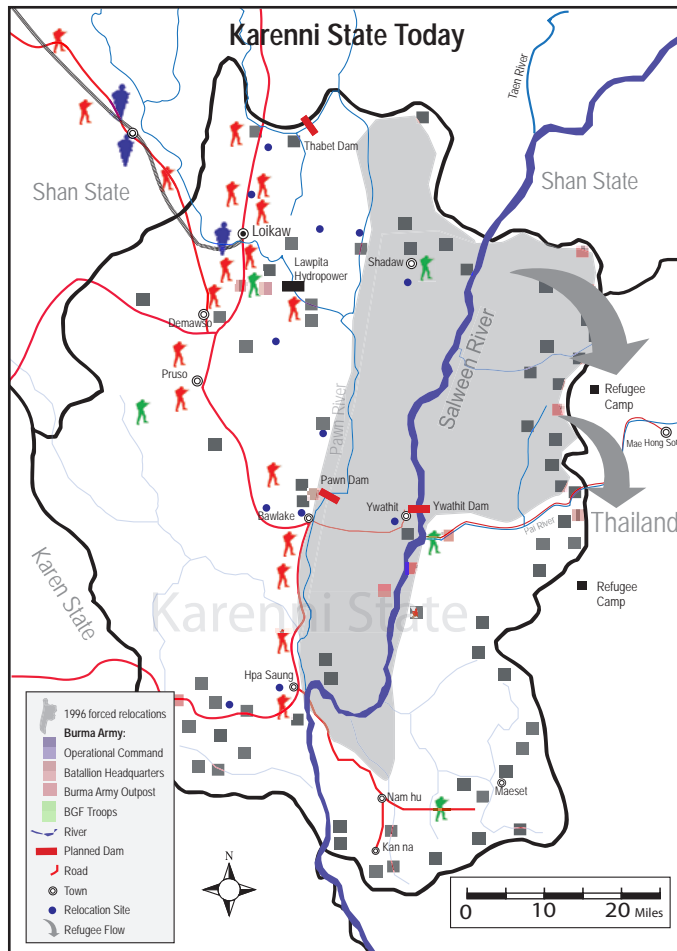


Destroying forests and biodiversity

Logging has recently been increasing in the area of the Ywathit dam; there are logging camps and saw mills along the Salween all the way to the Shan State border. These forests are in the bio-diverse ecoregion of the Kayah-Karen Montane Rainforests. Both dams will also negatively impact fisheries; the Salween is home to at least 47 species that can be found nowhere else in the world.



Logging near Bawlake



Reducing agricultural production

The Salween is a sediment-rich river, providing vital nutrients to gardens and farms along its banks for hundreds of kilometers downstream and helping to sustain the nearly ½ million people living in the Salween's delta area of Mon State, an important rice-producing region. The dam will block these sediments from reaching the farms that need them, decreasing productivity and impacting food security.



Threatening indigenous peoples

Thousands of indigenous peoples who were pushed off their lands during forced relocation campaigns have yet to return due to the ongoing conflict; the dams will make such a return even more difficult.

The dams are particularly threatening the Yintale, a sub-group of the Karenni that now number just 1,000. The Yintale rely on lowland farms near the banks of the Salween and Prawn rivers for their livelihood, traditionally planting millet and sesame as main crops. Their ancient capital, Bawlake, is just downstream of the Prawn Dam.



Karenni villagers prepare offerings for a traditional ceremony



This sign was posted to warn residents about unexpected and dangerous changes in water flows at the Shweli 1 Dam in northern Burma. Women, who use the river more than men for domestic tasks, are especially vulnerable to unpredictable water surges.



Yintale people at the Salween River

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Water surges and shortages

Water will be stored and released from behind the dams according to electricity demands, not the safety of downstream residents or agricultural needs. Sudden surges and drops in water levels can be fatal. Water shortages and potential salt-water intrusion at the delta would be disastrous for farmers. Finally, the dam is located near fault lines; an earthquake could cause a dam break, leading to devastating floods.

Datang Corporation: A Stain on the Global Compact

Datang Corporation is a member of the United Nations Global Compact, a policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. In its Guidance on Responsible Business in Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas, the Global Compact specifically encourages businesses to make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses, institute grievance mechanisms, and identify how their business operations interact with conflict dynamics so that they do no harm.



Call

Dam projects should not be considered without carrying out full environmental and social impact assessments along the entire length of rivers. There can be no such assessments and no sustainable development without genuine peace. We therefore call for an immediate moratorium on all dams in Karenni State and on the Salween.



www.burmariversnetwork.org
www.salweenwatch.org