

## **Over 400 local villagers gather to call for halt of dams on Namtu River in northern Shan State**

March 22, 2017

On March 21, 2017, over 400 local villagers gathered on the Namtu river bank in northern Shan State calling for the protection of water resources and a halt to dams on the Namtu river.

From 9:00 am to 11:00 am, villagers from Da Dae, Ta Long, and 20 other villages around Hsipaw township, as well as members of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) and Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP), gathered on the river bank near Da Dae village, north of Hsipaw town, to mark the month of the International Day of Action for Rivers.

A series of four new dams are being planned along the Namtu river, which would threaten communities and ecosystems relying on the river's natural flow. Construction has begun on one of these dams, the Upper Yeywa dam, being built by Chinese, German, Swiss and Japanese companies, despite its location in an active warzone.

The Upper Yeywa dam would entirely submerge Wan Ta Long village, with its 650 inhabitants, as well as ancient historical sites, and the fertile agricultural land which villagers have relied on for generations.

The Namtu river flows across the Kyaukyan fault line, along which the biggest recorded earthquake in Burma's history took place, in 1912. The fault line cuts through Nawngkhio, Kyaukme district, northern Shan State, where the 700 megawatt Middle Yeywa dam is planned by Norway on the Namtu river.

"The government should listen to local communities' voices, because they are elected by the people. They should not proceed with dams on the Namtu river which local people are opposed to," said Nang Lao Kham, a Ta Long villager whose home will be submerged, and one of the ceremony organizers.

SNLD and SNDP members who joined the prayer ceremony for the Namtu River to flow freely, stated their commitment to stand with the local people.

"We will stand firm with the wishes of the local people and protect our river," said one of the local political party members.

### **Contacts**

Sai Thum Ai +95 (0)9-718-799-82

Nang Lao Kham +95 (0)9-262-108-062