



### **Update by the Shan Human Rights Foundation**

May 3, 2021

#### **Forced labour, use of human shields, looting by Burma Army during operation against RCSS/SSA in Namzarng, southern Shan State**

During the last week of April 2021, Burma Army troops and their militia allies used villagers as forced laborers and human shields, and looted property, during a multi-pronged operation against the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) in Namzarng, southern Shan State.

On April 21, the Burma Army's Eastern Central Regional Commander, Major-General Kyaw Kyaw Naing, summoned leaders of four of their militia allies to a meeting in Namzarng town, and ordered them to help crack down on the Civil Disobedience Movement and clear out RCSS/SSA troops from around Kengtawng, southern Shan State. Each militia group was ordered to provide 100 men each. The militia groups were the Mak Keng militia, Na Yai militia, SSS militia, and Kali militia, which all operate in southern Shan State.

About 500 Burma Army troops were then deployed from north, south and west towards the Nam Teng river valley in southeast Namzarng township, adjoining Kengtawng.

On April 22, around 7-8 am, Burma Army troops from Light Infantry Battalions (LIB) 332 and 575 based in Mong Pan clashed with RCSS/SSA troops north of Mong Nai, around Na Khan and Kawng Yao villages.

On the same day, Burma Army troops from Namzarng clashed with RCSS/SSA troops near Loi Ngern village, about 20 kilometers east of Namzarng town.

On April 23, at 3:10 pm, over 100 Burma Army troops from LIB 574 and LIB 576, based in Kengtawng, together with militia members, arrived in the village of Pha Sawng, about 25 kilometers south of Kho Lam on the Nam Teng river, and forced seven male villagers to carry water for them in two small trucks to the road intersection east of the village.

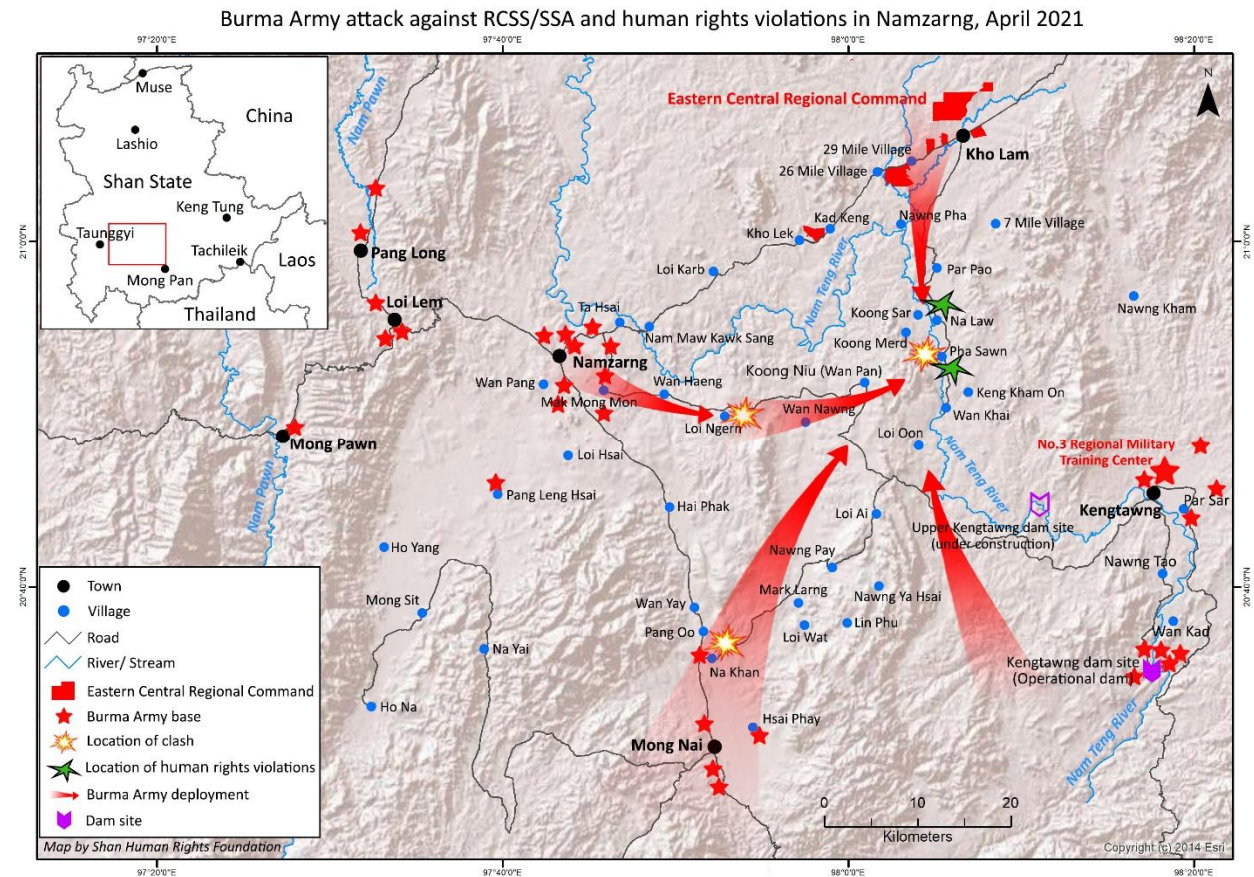
At 3:30 pm, these Burma Army troops ordered all the villagers in Pha Sawng to gather at the local temple. There are 80 houses in Pha Sawng, with about 300 villagers. The Burma Army troops then divided into two groups; one went to search in the village and the other stayed guarding the villagers at the temple.

At 5 pm, some Burma Army troops patrolling in the jungle ran into RCSS/SSA troops and fighting broke out near Pha Sawng village.

At about 6 pm, during the fighting, the Burma Army troops at Pha Sawng temple arrested six male villagers from the temple and tied them up outside the temple.

At 7:30 pm, the Burma Army and militia troops in Pha Sawng looted property from six villagers' houses.

Due to the fighting and Burma Army abuses, some inhabitants of villages around Pha Sawm fled to take shelter in nearby towns.



On April 24, at 4:30 pm, some Pha Sawm elders appealed to the Burma Army troops to release the six villagers who had been arrested from Pha Sawm temple. The troops untied them, but did not release them.

On April 24, another group of Burma Army soldiers forced two men from Seven Mile village, 10 kilometers south of Kho Lam, to guide them south to Na Law village on the Nam Teng river. The two villagers were released at 7:30 pm.

On April 25, at 11 am, the Burma Army and militia troops at Pha Sawm split up into two groups: one group went south, and the other group went to the northeast of Pha Sawm village. The six Pha Sawm villagers arrested by the Burma Army were taken south, and made to walk with the troops as human shields for about five kilometers until they reached the village of Wan Khai, beside the Nam Teng river. After spending the night at Wan Khai, the troops released the six Pha Sawm villagers, and allowed them to return home.

On April 28, the villagers around Pha Sawm who had fled to take shelter in town returned to their homes.

On March 30, the Burma Army warned the Thai authorities they would start attacking the RCSS/SSA camps along the southern Shan State-Thai border, because the RCSS/SSA was siding with the anti-coup protest movement. The Burma Army fired shells at these camps on April 18, 19 and 21, striking fear among the over 6,000 IDPs sheltering in these areas.

*List of property looted from Pha Sawn villagers by Burma Army and their militia on April 23, 2021*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Property looted</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1	Sai Pedi + Nang Ying	2 big knife	15,000 kyat
		Cooking oil, 1 bottle	3,000 Kyat
		Condiments	5,000 kyat
2	Sai Hla + Nang Khaek	Rice	25,000 kyat
		10 chickens	60,000 Kyat
		1 big knife	7,000 kyat
		Condiments	5,000 kyat
3	Loong Kumma + Pa Pong	1 big knife	7,000 kyat
		1 big cooking pot	8,000 kyat
		Soybean cake, 2 viss	10,000 kyat
		Condiments	4,000 kyat
4	Sai Sujingda + Nang Mann	Chicken, 5 viss	30,000 kyat
		Rice	12,000 kyat
		Condiments	5,000 kyat
5	Sai Mala + Nang Oong	Chicken, 5 viss	30,000 kyat
		Condiments	5,000 kyat
6	Nang Hawng	15 plastic buckets	30,000 kyat

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