

# Open letter to ethnic armed resistance groups and political parties in Shan State

April 25, 2023

The SAC military regime is pushing ahead with construction of the Upper Yeywa and Namtu hydropower projects on the Dohktawaddy river in Kyaukme and Hsipaw townships of northern Shan State. These projects will flood eleven village tracts of Hsipaw township, including Bawgyo tract, site of the historic Bawgyo pagoda, and Lilu village of Namsan township, impacting tens of thousands of local residents.

Local communities who will be impacted by the dams have opposed the projects from the outset, but have been ignored by previous governments as well as by the current military regime.

Rivers are the lifeblood of all of us living in Shan State, and should be protected and preserved. We rely on Shan State's rivers, including the Dohktawaddy, not only for transport and agriculture, but also for sustaining our ecosystem and biodiversity. Dam construction will destroy these vital arteries.

The large dams already built on Shan State's rivers produce over half of Burma's hydropower, but many of Shan State's population still do not have access to electricity. The two dams being built on the Dohktawaddy will also not benefit the Shan State people.

Most importantly, the dam projects are totally lacking in transparency. The military regime has failed to disclose who will benefit from the dam projects, and where the power generated will be used. We are particularly concerned that this will indirectly impact states' efforts to establish a federal democracy. The social and environmental impact assessments for the dam projects have not been carried out transparently and have distorted the real opinions of local communities.

It is therefore urgently needed for ethnic armed resistance groups and political parties to protect Shan State's rivers – our lifeblood -- and stand together with local communities. On behalf of the local peoples whose lives will be destroyed by the dams, we respectfully urge you to use any means to help stop the construction of the Upper Yeywa and Namtu hydropower projects, and the planned Middle Yeywa dam, on the Dohktawaddy river.

From the following organisations:

1. Global Shan Network
2. Tai Youth Yangon
3. Tai Youth Community South Korea
4. Tai Youth Network Japan
5. Tai Youth Htong Mao
6. Tai Students' Union
7. Namtu River Protectors
8. Progressive Youth Network Hsipaw
9. Kyun Ta Htaung Myae Foundation
10. Shan Youth WingMaw
11. Shan Community in Japan
12. Tai Community (Canada)
13. Tai Youth Laikha

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