

## **Press Release August 4, 2009**

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### **New report reveals human costs of planned Salween mega-dam in war-torn Shan State**

A new report released today provides a rare glimpse of communities struggling to survive amidst civil war and abuses in the flood zone of the tallest dam planned for Southeast Asia in southern Shan State of Burma.

The report “Roots and Resilience” by the Shan Sapawa Environment Organization focuses on the ecologically unique area of Keng Kham, a community of 15,000 that was forcibly relocated over ten years ago; the majority have fled to Thailand. Today the estimated 3,000 that remain are managing to maintain their livelihoods and culture despite the constant threats of the Burma Army and the impending Tasang dam.

Indigenous Shan cultural practices, river-fed farms, sacred cave temples and pristine waterfalls are depicted in photos from this isolated war-zone, together with updated information about the dam project, which has been shrouded in secrecy.

The 7, 110 MW Tasang Dam is the biggest of five dams planned on the Salween River; the majority of the power from the dam will be sold to Thailand. Project investors include the Thai MDX Company and China’s Gezhouba Group Company.

Thailand’s support for the controversial dam was recently reiterated when the project was included in its national Power Development Plan.

Military tension has escalated in recent months in Shan State as the Burmese regime has been putting pressure on the United Wa State Army to transform into a “Border Guard Force.” Abuses linked to anti-insurgency campaigns are also on the rise.

“Why is Thailand accelerating plans for Tasang precisely when the situation is so uncertain?” said Sai Sai, a spokesperson from Shan Sapawa Environment Organization. “The dam is in a war zone. The Burma Army has forced villagers out of the area and many have come to Thailand. If the dam is built they won’t be able to go back.”

For more information please see [www.salweenwatch.org](http://www.salweenwatch.org)