New report exposes Burma Army-linked coal mining expansion in war-torn northern Shan State

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A new report “Blackening Our Future” by the Shan Human Rights Foundation exposes how the Mandalay-based conglomerate Ngwe Yi Pale and Burma Army have expanded their coal mining operations in war-torn northern Shan State, destroying farmlands, worsening water and air pollution, and forcing villagers at gunpoint to relocate from their homes.

The report documents harmful mining expansion in three conflict-ridden townships: Hsipaw, Tangyan and Mong Yai. In Hsipaw, Ngwe Yi Pale has expanded existing mines in Nam Ma, where the Directorate of Defence Industries has also started a large new coal mine under a 25-year concession, despite Nam Ma villagers’ repeated calls to stop the mining.

In Tangyan, Ngwe Yi Pale has dug mining tunnels directly beneath the village of Tak Liet, where underground explosions have shaken houses day and night, and mining waste is blackening the Pang River, the main tributary of the Salween. By mid-January 2021, all 82 households in Tak Liet had been forced to relocate to a barren site far from their fields.

In Mong Yai, Ngwe Yi Pale has expanded its two coal mines in Kho Sai tract, where Ngwe Yi Pale’s subsidiary, Than Daung Oo company, is building a large sugar factory.

Coal from Ngwe Yi Pale’s mines is being trucked to their two sugar factories and cement factory in Nawng Khio township, as well as to factories in Mandalay and other parts of Burma. Ngwe Yi Pale – which produces Crown cement and Sinn Shwe Li sugar – is part of the Mandalay-based Win Brothers Group of Companies.

These mines all lie in active conflict areas, where villagers fear reprisals by the Burma Army and its militias if they resist mining operations. On December 15, 2020, villagers opposing forced relocation by Ngwe Yi Pale in Tangyan, were arrested and tortured by the government’s Mong Ha militia.

SHRF is calling urgently for a moratorium on mining projects throughout the country until there is a new federal constitution which can bring peace and give communities the right to protect their lives, lands and rivers from destructive mining.

The report can be viewed on [www.shanhumanrights.org](http://www.shanhumanrights.org) or [here](http://www.shanhumanrights.org)

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