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Update by the Shan Human Rights Foundation

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Year's end brings fresh attacks and human rights violations by Burma Army in all parts of Shan State

From December 31 2017 to January 7, 2018, six Burma Army battalions under all four regional military commands in Shan State launched attacks on Shan armed groups- irrespective of whether they had signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) - and committed human rights violations against local civilians in northern, southern and eastern Shan State. Violations included torture, arbitrary arrest, forced labor, requisitioning of food and vehicles, and threats to burn down a village.

On December 31, 2017 over 100 Burma Army troops of (IB) 147 and 243 under the NE Command attacked and burned down a drug rehabilitation centre run by the Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA) at Nam Yam about 30 miles southeast of Hsipaw town. On the same day, the troops arbitrarily arrested four civilians – badly torturing one of them - and requisitioned five local vehicles.

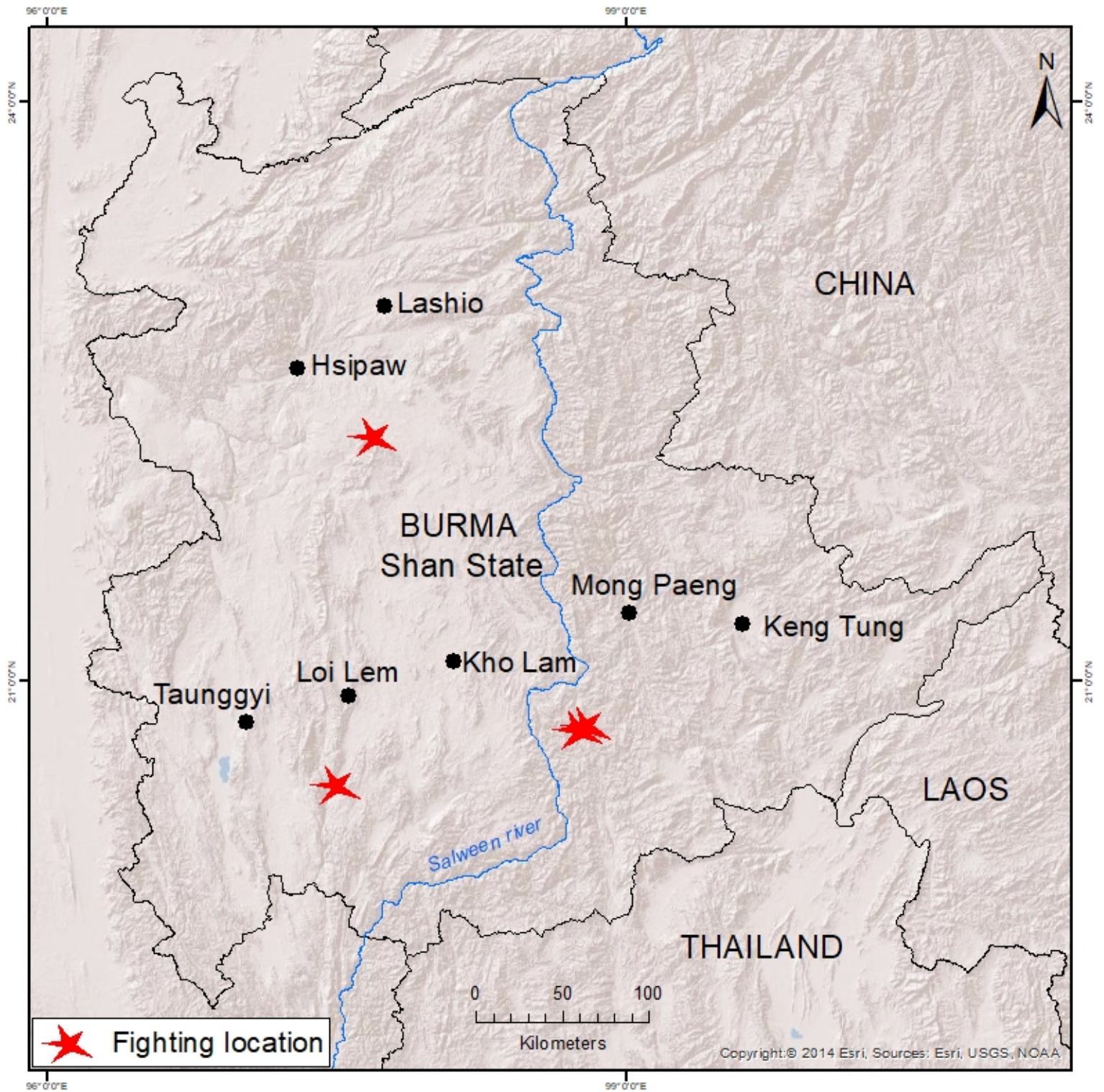
On January 3, 2018, Burma Army IB 292, under the Kholam-based Central Eastern Command, and LIB 332, under the Taunggyi-based Eastern Command, attacked a camp of the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) camp in Loilem, southern Shan State. On January 5, these troops forced a local villager to guide them for five miles.

On January 5 and 6, 2018, Burma Army troops from LIB 333 and IB 43, under the Kengtung-based Triangle Military Command, clashed three times with RCSS/SSA in Mong Paeng township, eastern Shan State, after which the Burma Army troops interrogated and threatened to burn down a local village, and extorted food from local villagers.

The fact that these attacks and violations were committed by troops from all regional commands in Shan State is extremely worrying. There were clearly high-level orders from Naypyidaw to militarily engage the ethnic armed groups, whether they have signed the NCA or not, and to persecute civilians suspected of supporting these groups.

With the recent blocking of community consultations organized by the RCSS/SSA in preparation for the Union Peace Conference, all indications are that the Burma Army is gearing up for war in 2018, not peace.

Location of Burma Army attacks on SSPP/SSA and RCSS/SSA, Dec 31 2017 - Jan 6, 2018



Details of human rights violations are as follows:

Northern Shan State:

Four villagers arbitrarily arrested by Burma Army IB147 and 243 in Hsipaw

At midday on December 31, 2017, over 100 troops of Burma Army troops of IB 147 (based at Nawng Kaw) and 243 (based at Namlan) attacked the SSPP/SSA base at Nam Yam about 30 miles southeast of Hsipaw town and burned down a drug rehabilitation centre operated by the SSPP/SSA.

After the attack, these troops arrested three local villagers from the nearby village of Wan Koong Yoam, who were on their way home from milling their corn at Nam Heo. One of the villagers was found in possession of a walkie-talkie, and was severely tortured by the soldiers, who cut the top of his head with a knife.

On that day at 2 pm, a Ta'ang couple from Wan Nam Lin were coming from the direction of Hsawng Ke, when they saw the Burmese soldiers with the three arrested villagers. Their heads were covered with plastic sacks. The Burmese troops stopped the couple for two hours and interrogated them about who they were, where were they from, and where were they going to.

Later that day, they arrested another villager from Wan Mai, for possession of a hunting rifle.

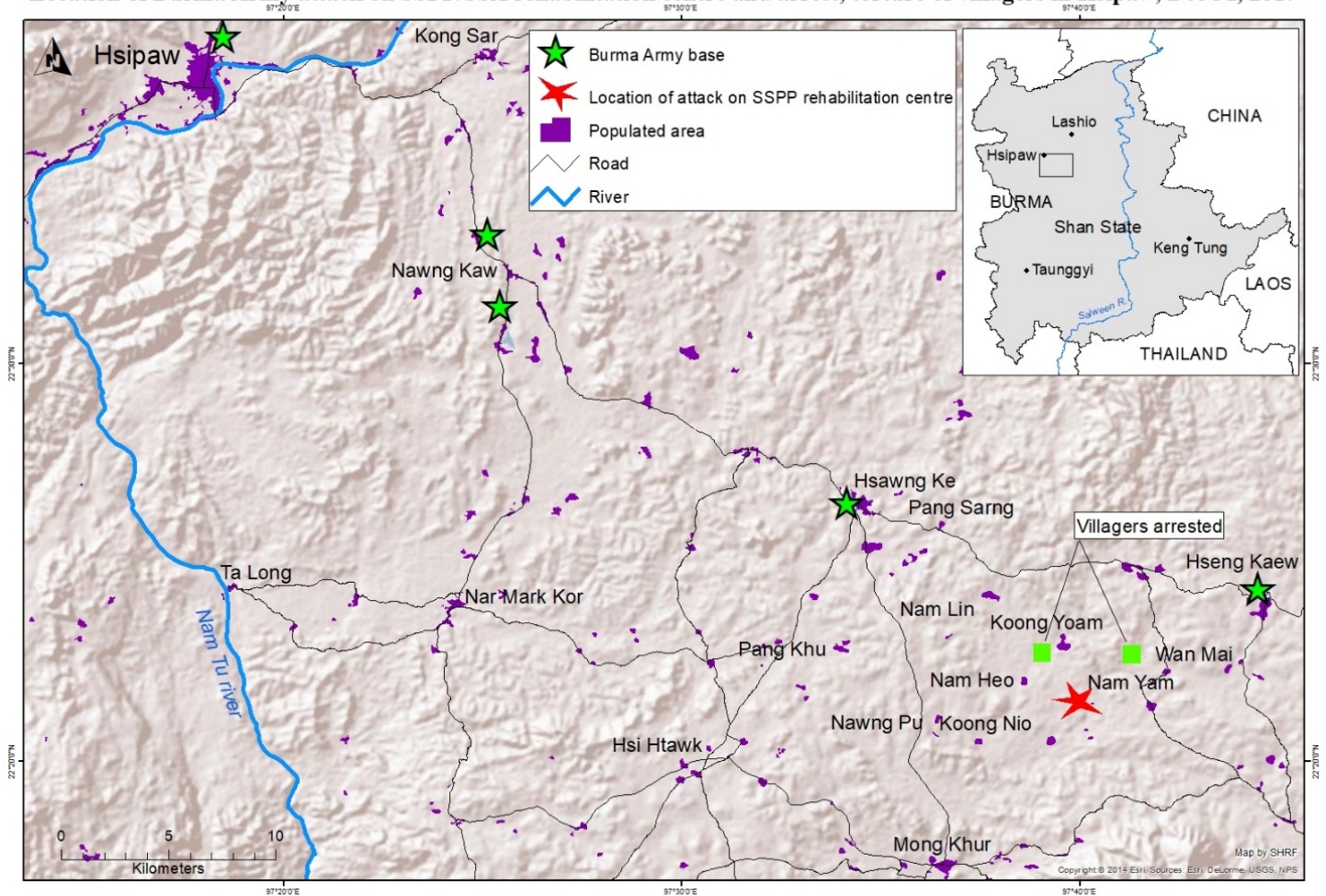
On January 1, 2018 at 3:00 pm, a Member of Parliament from Hsipaw, Long Sai Kham Aung, together with the chairman of Sawng Ke village tract and the chairman of Pang Sarn village tract, went to meet the troops at Sawng Ke, where they were camping at the local temple. They asked them to release the four villagers. The officer in charge, Captain Myo Kyaw Khaing, told them that two villagers would be released soon, but the other two, who were caught in possession of a gun and a walkie-talkie, would have to be put in jail. The soldiers then took the four villagers back to their base at Nawng Kaw on January 2.

On January 22, 2018, their relatives learned that all four villagers had been handed over to the police at Lashio and been put in jail.

The arrested villagers were:

1. Sai Lu, aged 30, son of Lung Saw Ya, villager of Wan Koong Yoam, Hseng Kaew village tract, Hsipaw township (There are 30 households in Koong Yoam village). He was caught with a walkie-talkie and tortured.
2. Sai Lu, aged 35, son of Nai Nang, from Wan Koong Yoam.
3. Sai Oong Kyaw, aged 40, son of Lung Kyaw from Wan Koong Yoam
4. Sai Tu aged 30, son of Khing Aung and Nai Mai from Wan Mai village, Hseng Kaew village tract, Hsipaw township. He had a hunting rifle, and was arrested by Burmese soldiers as he was passing from Wan Mai to Koong Yoam. This was witnessed by villagers of Wan Koong Yoam.

Location of Burma Army attack on SSPP/SSA rehabilitation centre and arrest, torture of villagers in Hsipaw, Dec 31, 2017



Villagers' vehicles requisitioned to transport Burma Army troops of IB 243 and 147 to and from attack on SSPP/SSA base in Hsipaw

At 8 am on December 31, the day of the attack by Burma Army IB 243 and IB 147 against the SSPP/SSA's Nam Yam base, the Burma Army troops left the village Wan Pang Khu, and demanded two trucks from villagers of Wan Nawng Pu to carry them towards Wan Koong Nio, after which they launched their attack on Nam Yam.

After burning the SSPP/SSA's base and rehabilitation centre, the Burma Army troops left Nam Yam at midnight on December 31. They went west through Wan Ham Heo, then arrived at Koong Yoam village, where they ordered trucks to transport them to Hsawng Ke in Hsipaw township.



Drug rehabilitation centre burned down by Burma Army in Hsipaw

The owners of the trucks requisitioned in Wan Koong Yoam were:

1. Nai Aung, a widow from Wan Koong Yoam
2. Sai Kham Pang, from Wan Koong Yoam
3. Sai Kham Lu, from Wan Koong Yoam

Southern Shan State:

Villager forced to guide troops of Burma Army IB 292 and LIB 332

On January 3, 2018 at 1:30 pm, about 90 troops of Burma Army IB 292 and LIB 332 attacked four RCSS/SSA troops guarding their camp at Sao Mong (spirit house) near Wan Long Khing village, Nawng Lieng village tract, Loi Lem township, as they were having lunch. One RCSS/SSA soldier was killed and one injured.

On January 5, 2018, troops of IB 292 went into Wan Nawng Pa Deb village and ordered the village headman to find them a guide. Sai Tun, age 19, from Koong Awk quarter of Nawng Pa Deb was then forced to guide them to Wan Nawng Hang, 5 miles from Nawng Pa Deb, south of Wan Loi Kern, Nawng Lieng village tract, Loi Lem township. He was released that evening.

Burma Army IB 292 is based at Kawng Hsai, Peang Jai village tract, Nam Sang township under the Kho Lam-based Central Eastern Military Command. LIB 332 is based at Mong Pan under MOC 17, under the Taunggyi-based Eastern Military Command, southern Shan State.

Eastern Shan State:

Burma Army troops of LIB 333 and IB 43 threaten to burn down a village, and extort food in Mong Paeng

On January 5, 2018 at 10:40 am fighting broke out between RCSS/SSA and Burma Army LIB 333 between Wan Peang Hsang and Mark Hin Tang villages, at Huay Hua Khir, Mong Pu Long village tract, Mong Peang township. On January 6, another clash took place between the same LIB 333 troops and RCSS/SSA

between Wan Lawn Kaew and Wan Peang Hsang villages, Mong Pu Long village tract. Also on January 6, there was a clash between troops of Burma Army IB 43 and RCSS/SSA at Loi Khir, Yang Kham village tract, Mong Peang township.

In the evening of January 6, the LIB 333 troops called the headman of Wan Lawn Kaew village, and questioned him about RCSS/SSA movements in that area. They also ordered the villagers of Lawn Kaew to give them ten viss (approx. 16 kg) of pork. The headman urged them not to demand this, saying that the villagers didn't have money to buy the pork. But it was in vain, and the villagers had to collect money to buy them eight viss of pork.

On January 7, 2018, Burma Army troops at Loi Khir base, called the headman of the nearby village of Wan Na Yang, Yang Kham village tract, Mong Peang township, and interrogated him about the village guest list. They said that if any further fighting occurred, they would burn down the entire village. The Burmese soldiers also checked the local government militia's guns in the village and sniffed their gun muzzles to find out whether they had just been fired or not.

The Burma Army LIB 333 is based in Mong Hsat, and is under the control of Military Operations Command 14, which is under the Kengtung-based Triangle Military Command.

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