Burmese Army Ransacked Village in Chin State

5th June 2020 -- Yangon/London -- A Tatmadaw (Burmese Army) column ransacked Mi Let Wa village in Chin State's Palatwa Township on 26 May, an eyewitness told Burma Human Rights Network. He said a military column retreated from the village at 11 a.m. and came back around 2:30 p.m. and attacked the village. Mi Let Wa Auk is situated on the bank of Kalandan River.

"It took place around 2:45 p.m. The military column, which was in the village before has retreated, and another one came into the village. The column that came later first attacked the village with heavy weapons. From our village, Palatwa town is very close; the two places are divided only by a small river. We could see everything. We could see clearly the military column entered into the village," the eyewitness said.

A column of the No. 289 Battalion has been stationed in the village since April.

"The intentional destruction of civilian homes by the Burmese Army has long been one of their favourite tactics to inflict suffering on the people in times of conflict with insurgents. For too long the world has allowed them to violate the most basic of human rights of the most vulnerable in the country. This is not only in violations several international laws, but completely disregards the most recent orders from the International Court of Justice which were established to stop the genocide of another vulnerable minority in the country, the Rohingya. Burma will not cease until there are consequences from the global community. Those consequences must come now," said BHRN Executive Director, Kyaw Win.

Mi Lat Wa village is divided into two parts; the upper part and the lower parts. In the upper part of the village, there are 229 families residing and 129 in the lower part of the village. The majority of people in both villages are Khumi ethnic people.

An IDP U Naing Wai, who was a resident of Palatwa Township and displaced in an earlier incident, said at least 60 homes were burned down in the incident.

"We could see the village burning from Palatwa town. We could see the movement of the Myanmar army. However, we could not see how many troops entered the village. The village has more than 100 houses, and about 60 were burned down," he said.

Due to the conflict situation, many residents of upper and lower villages of Mi Lat Wa village fled about two months ago. A group of IDPs who were from the two villages tried to go back to the village on boats to extinguish the fire but were shot at by Tatmadaw column.

An unnamed witness said, "I was worried about my house. And we went to the village as we thought the troops might have left. We went on two speed boats, and another one followed us. One boat was in front of the one I was on. That boat came under fire from a Tatmadaw column, we all had to duck".

Another eyewitness who was among the people on the boat confirmed to BHRN that it came under attack from a military column. He said the boats were forced to return to Palatwa. He said among the people

who were left in the Mi Let Wa village included U Whay Pa, who is 90 and his wife who is aged 80. A local MP, U Myo Htet (a.k.a) Salai Myo Htet confirmed that the village was burned down but said he did not know who the culprit was.

The Tatmadaw conducted an aerial raid near the village on 21 March that has led to almost all of the people from Mi Lat Wa upper and lower villages as well as from Yut Wa, Kaytha to flee to Palatwa Town.

The Tatmadaw previously launched an aerial attack on Meit Sa village no 2 and 3 in Palatwa Township on 14 March in which 12 people were killed and 15 others were injured, said a number of local MPs and village administrators. In other aerial attacks by Tatmadaw on 14 and 15 March, 21 civilians from the five villages in Palatwa were killed, and 28 others were injured.

BHRN calls on the International Community, particularly the UN, US, EU, and ASEAN Nations, to issue further sanctions against the Burmese Army and, if crimes continue, against the Burmese Government as well. The rights of all minorities in Burma must be protected and without the support of major democratic countries this will not happen.

Organisation's Background

BHRN is based in London, operates across Burma and works for human rights, minority rights and religious freedom in Burma. BHRN has played a crucial role advocating for human rights and religious freedom with politicians and world leaders.

Media Enquiries

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