No Rape

No Dams on the Salween
NO TO RAPE

NO TO DAMS ON THE SALWEEN

The mighty Salween River flows for 2,400 kilometres from the Himalayan foothills through the Shan, Karenni, Karen and Mon States of Burma into the Indian Ocean. It is the only remaining free-flowing major river in the region.

But now the Salween River is in danger of being dammed.

The Burmese military regime and the Thai government are planning to build a series of dams along the Salween River which will have devastating social and environmental impacts.

Over 10 million people living in the 320,000 square-kilometre Salween River Basin will be affected if these dams are built.

The planned dams lie in ethnic areas of Burma which have been heavily militarized by the Burmese regime, and where the Burmese military routinely oppresses the local peoples. Already over 600,000 ethnic peoples have been forcibly relocated by the regime to secure the areas for military-controlled "development."

The first of the Salween dams is planned in Shan State. On December 20, 2002, Burma's military regime signed a contract with the Thai company MDX to build a giant hydropower dam in Shan State. This dam will have a capacity of 4,500 megawatts and will be the biggest in Southeast Asia.

The dam site lies in the vast area of Central Shan State that has already been devastated since 1996 by the regime's massive forced relocation campaign. Over 300,000 villagers have been driven at gunpoint from their homes; countless villagers have been tortured and massacred, and countless women have been raped by the Burmese military.

In June 2002, the Shan Women's Action Network jointly produced a report called "Licence to Rape" which documents 173 incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence, involving 625 girls and women, committed by Burmese troops in Shan State, mostly from 1996-2001. 83% of the rapes were committed by officers, in most cases in front of their troops. The rapes involved extreme brutality and often torture, such as beating, mutilation and suffocation. 25% of the rapes resulted in death. 61% were gang-rapes.

Over half of these incidents of sexual violence took place in the areas close to the Salween dam site and the potential flood area.

If the Salween dams are built, these abuses by the Burmese military are sure to worsen. The income generated by the dam projects will also help fund the regime's military expenditure.

We urge our friends around the world to do the following:

- to write to the Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to stop any agreements with the Burmese regime to build dams on the Salween River.
- to urge your governments to prevent all international financial institutions from funding or promoting these dam projects.

For further information, contact:

**Concerned Individuals:** iciab@mailasia.com

We are grassroots activists concerned about international aid to Burma.