

September 5, 2002

SWAN denounces Burmese regime's investigation into rape report as a sham

SWAN is outraged at the recent responses by the Burmese military regime to the report "Licence to Rape" and calls on the international community to challenge the results of the regime's sham investigation into the report.

On August 23 and August 26, 2002, the military regime organised press conferences claiming that the report "Licence to Rape" by SWAN and the Shan Human Rights Foundation was "false and fabricated" and "exposing" that exiled men from Burma were behind the report.

In fact, numerous reports have reached the Thai-Burma border confirming that the regime's so-called "investigation" involved forcing villagers in central and southern Shan State to sign documents testifying that no incidents of sexual violence had been committed by Burmese troops in their areas. There were also reports that the regime's investigation teams suppressed information about incidents of sexual violence brought to their attention.

"The regime's so-called investigation is just adding to the wounds of the women who have suffered sexual violence. Not only have they been raped, but now they are being called liars," said SWAN spokeswoman Nang Mo Hurng.

Furthermore, the regime's accusation that men masterminded the report is not only an insult to us, but also to the integrity and ability of all women from Burma.

SWAN calls on the international community not to let the regime get away with this travesty of justice.

For the sake of the women who have suffered and continue to suffer the nightmare of sexual violence inside Burma, SWAN urges the international community to support our struggle to end this violence, and to step up efforts to restore peace, democracy and the rule of law inside Burma.

For further information, contact:

Nang Charm Tong at: + 66 1 885 4347

Nang Hseng Noungat: + 66 1884 4963

Nang Mo Hurng at: +66 1 784 7386