

February 11, 2003

### Military gang-rape occurs as International Red Cross visits Shan State

On January 30, 2003, the same day a team of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was visiting Central Shan State, a woman was gang-raped only a few miles away by troops of the Burmese military regime, local villagers have reported.

The incident occurred in a village near the town of Laikha, when a patrol of troops from a military base at Kho Lam detained the 35-year-old Shan woman in her house. She was gang-raped by eight soldiers in the presence of her four children.

The ICRC, which spent several days in the Laikha area, was conducting its second visit in two months to Central Shan State to assess the conditions of the local population. Their policy is not to publicly expose human rights violations, but to raise issues confidentially with relevant authorities.

"We are very disturbed that such abuses are continuing under the very noses of international monitors," said Nang Mo Lao of the Shan Women's Action Network. "It throws into serious doubt the regime's sincerity about reform."

On January 30, representatives of Amnesty International were also allowed into Burma for the first time by the regime, but did not travel to Shan State.

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