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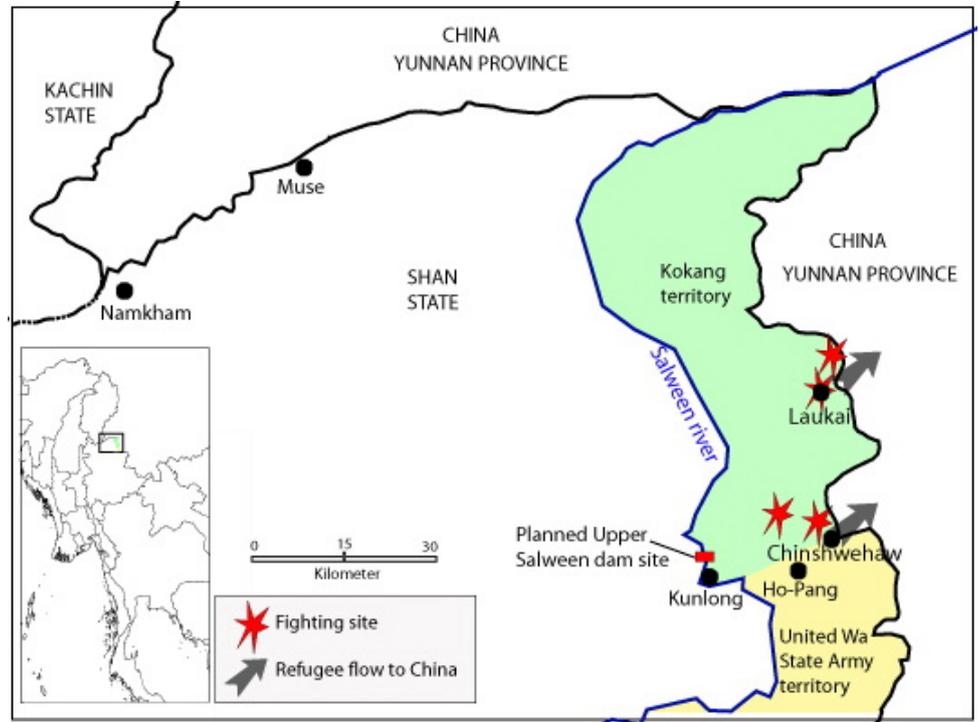
Press Release

By Shan Sapawa Environmental Organisation

Renewed fighting and refugee influx a wake-up call to Chinese dam-builders *Burma Army clashes with Kokang at site of planned Upper Salween Dam*

Shan activists are calling on China to immediately halt all investment in dams on the Salween River following the recent heavy fighting between the Burmese military regime and the Kokang ceasefire army near the site of the Upper Salween Dam planned by Chinese companies in northern Shan State.

Heavy clashes have taken place just east of the town of Kunlong, about 15 kms from the planned dam site. Fighting broke out on August 27, 2009, after the regime deployed thousands of troops to seize control of the Kokang territory, shattering the 20-year ceasefire and causing over 30,000 refugees to flee to China. Kokang forces have sought to repel the Burma Army troops.



Plans to build the Upper Salween Dam, also known as the Kunlong Dam, were announced in April 2007 by two Chinese companies, Hanergy Holding Group (formerly Farsighted Investment Group) and Gold Water Resources Company. Since then a team of Chinese and Burmese technicians have been conducting feasibility studies for the 2,400 MW dam, 25 kms from the Chinese border.

The Kunlong Dam is one of five mega dams being planned on the Salween in Burma by the SPDC and Chinese and Thai companies, to produce electricity to be sold to China and Thailand. The Shan Sapawa Environmental Organisation, together with the Salween Watch coalition of environmental groups from Thailand and Burma, has been monitoring the controversial dam plans for ten years and advocating for their immediate halt.

“The renewed fighting and the flood of refugees into Yunnan should be a wake-up call to China about the risks of investing in Burma,” said Sapawa spokesperson Sai Khur Hseng. “Not only is there no free and informed consent to these dam projects, but they are being built over the dead bodies of our people.”

The other mega dam being planned in Shan State is the giant 7,110 MW Ta Sang dam, 100 km from the Thai border. In early August, the regime renewed a scorched earth campaign in townships close to the Ta Sang dam site, torturing and killing civilians and driving 10,000 villagers from their homes.

For further information on the Salween dam plans, see www.salweenwatch.org

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