

## **KNU Update on Impacts Resulting from Hatgyi Dam Construction**

*07 Feb 2011*

On August 4th, 2009 we, the KNU, issued a statement concerning the Hatgyi dam construction project. In the statement, we called upon the countries investing in construction of the dam to withdraw their investment as the construction of the dam would cause massive damage to the environment and bring on widespread human rights violations against local populations in the form of burning down of villages, looting of property, crop destruction, killing of livestock, extortion of money, torture and killing of suspects, rape of women, forced relocation and forced labour by troops of the SPDC military dictatorship.

On November 7, 2010 the regime held general elections which were stage-managed to eliminate the opposition. It is now in the process of convening a parliament and forming a government. Due to the manipulation of the constitution and the elections both parliament and government are being stacked with military men who have changed into civilian clothes or with members of the SPDC's proxy party, the Union Solidarity and Development Party. As the new government will predictably have the same principles, policies and programs as the current regime we see no realistic possibility of peace and stability coming to our nation soon, particularly for Karen State. On the contrary, widely unconditional demands of the regime and the greatly intensified post-election conflict that have resulted show that the chances of peace are reduced. The national reconciliation we have long been seeking was totally rejected by the SPDC and will almost certainly again be rejected by the new military dominated puppet government.

Accordingly the KNU's position is that:

1. Without peace and stability the gross human rights abuses our people have suffered for so long will continue. Militarization of wide areas around development and dam sites will continue to intensify abuses in these areas. Until it can be proven that planned developments will improve conditions instead of worsening the suffering for the majority of our people they cannot be accepted.
2. The Hatgyi dam site is dangerously close to active geological fault lines. Although the EIA was inadequate, it revealed that flood resistance standards, and therefore other aspects of dam strength, were deliberately lowered by Sinohydro, EGAT and MSDI. Failure of the Hatgyi or any of the many large upstream dams would utterly devastate Hpaan, Moulmein and other areas. Such endangerment is irresponsible and unacceptable.
3. The Thai government has demanded a new EIA for the Hatgyi dam. We call for full social and environmental impact assessments that properly investigate all potential impacts and problems for all areas and communities likely to be affected by the project on both sides of the border.
4. Lack of proper surveys to determine the extent and possibility of damage means no effective plans can have been made for limiting damage to the environment and preventing human rights violations.
5. We are gravely concerned about corruption, military expansion and the lack of benefit sharing. No resource sale revenues have been used to improve education or health access for the peoples of Burma. Meanwhile, inequalities grow along with the size of the military.

For these and other reasons too numerous to mention here, we again earnestly call upon the authorities concerned and those considering investing in the dam project to halt implementation of the project, at least until there is a viable peace in Burma and until it can be shown that all negative impacts are avoided or mitigated .

The SPDC military dictatorship constantly shows its callous lack of concern for the interests and welfare of the people. So long as it retains its grip on power, in one guise or another we urge Thailand, China and all peace loving countries to impose an arms embargo on Burma along with trade, economic, investment, financial and diplomatic sanctions. Above all, we ask for refuge for those of our people displaced and dispossessed by the oppression and for our neighbours to refrain from activities that exploit and worsen the situation of our peoples.

Executive Committee  
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