

**PRESS STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR RIVERS AND AGAINST DAMS:
MARCH 14, 2014**

By Burma Rivers Network

(33538) ethnic signatories and (131) civil society and political parties in Burma call for immediate halt to dams on the Salween River

(33538) people from Shan, Karenni, Karen and Mon State and (131) civil society and political parties in Burma have signed a petition urging an immediate halt to the six dams planned by the Burmese government on the Salween River, including the Kun Long/Upper Thanlwin, Nong Pa, Man Taung and Tasang dams in Shan State, Ywathit dam in Karenni State and Hatgyi dam in Karen State.

The Salween River is one of the longest free-flowing rivers in the world, and is the lifeblood of millions of ethnic people in Burma. The six dam projects with a combined capacity of about 15,000 megawatts, planned by Chinese, Burmese and Thai investors, are threatening the future of these people and the rich biodiversity of the Salween basin. Although the ones who will be most affected by the projects are the local communities living along the river, the majority of the generated electricity will go to China and Thailand, leaving very little or no benefits for these communities. Already, communities in over 60 villages have lost lands and houses due to construction of access roads in preparation for the Kunlong dam in northern Shan State. Accelerated logging and mining by military crony companies is also taking place along the river in the potential dam flood zones.

The Burmese government is proceeding with the dams despite ongoing conflict in the ethnic areas, causing increased militarization to provide security for surveying and construction, with accompanying Burma Army abuses against local civilians. Fighting has intensified in northern Shan State in recent months in areas near the Kunlong dam, the first being built on the Salween.

All six Salween dams are proceeding in violation of international dam building standards, which should ensure transparency and respect for rights of affected communities. The dam sites are strictly guarded, and local people have been given no information about the projects.

Downstream communities remain ignorant about impacts on water flows, fisheries and agriculture, as well the dangers of potential dam breaks.

We therefore urge the Burmese, Chinese and Thai governments, and the dam developers, including Thailand's EGAT International Co.Ltd, China Three Gorges Corporation, Hanergy Holding Company, Hydrochina Corporation, China Datang Overseas Investment Co.Ltd, and Burmese crony companies -- International Group of Entrepreneurs Co.Ltd, Shwe Taung and Asia World -- to halt immediately their plans to dam the Salween River.

It is especially urgent to halt these mega dam projects while the Burmese government and ethnic armed groups are embarking on a new peace process. Dispute over natural resources is a key driver of ethnic conflict in Burma, so it will only stoke further war if these projects proceed before this issue has even been brought to the negotiation table.

Instead of destroying the mighty Salween River and creating massive social and environmental problems by building the dams, we urge all stakeholders to protect and preserve this vital biodiverse artery, which has sustained our ethnic communities for generations.

Burma Rivers Network comprises 15 members, including Shan Sapawa Environmental Organisation, Karenni Civil Society Network, Mon Youth Progressive Organization, Love Salween Group and Karen Rivers Watch

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Endorsed by:

1. PaOh Youth Organization
2. Kachin Development Networking Group
3. Shan Sapawa Environmental Organization

4. Ethnic Community Development Forum
5. Burma Environment Working Group
6. Karen Environmental and Social Action Network
7. Mungchying RawtJat
8. Federation of Trade Union Kawthoolei
9. Arakan River Network
10. Love Salween
11. Karenni Civil Society Network
12. Kuki Women Human Right Organization
13. Kuki Youth Network
14. Mon Youth Progressive Organization
15. All Arakan Students' and Youths' Congress
16. Karen Office of Relief and Development
17. Shan Relief and Development Committee
18. Network for Chin Community Development
19. Mon Relief and Development Committee
20. Karenni Social Welfare and Development Centre
21. Karen Youth Organization
22. Karen Women Organization
23. Karen Student Network Group
24. Shwe Gas Movement
25. Arakan Oil Watch
26. Burma Rivers Network
27. Kayan New Generation Youth
28. Salween Watch
29. Chin Rivers Watch
30. Sein Yaung So Activities
31. REAM
32. Sein Yaung So Myintkyina
33. Kachin State Political Poisoned Group
34. Sein Yaung So Kather
35. 88 Open Society Group
36. 88 Open Society
37. GREEN FOR ALL
38. GREEN FUTURE
39. Former Political Prisoners

40. 88 New Generation
41. Sein Yaung So (Sint Kai)
42. Sein Lann Pyin Oo Lwin
43. ထီးချိုင့်ကွန်ယက်
44. Sein Yaung So (Kyaut Se)
45. နှလုံးလှပင်လယ်
46. သွေးချင်းဧရာဝတီ
47. အတိုင်ပင်ခံသတင်းကွန်ယက်
48. KURM
49. Ba.La.Tha
50. Sein Yaung So (Tada-U)
51. Sein Lann Moe Gote
52. Green Network (Magway)
53. Tamar Ayeat (women group)
54. Grow Back for Posterity
55. Second root group
56. The voice Daily
57. Green for All
58. ကချင်အမျိုးသားအတိုင်ပင်ခံအဖွဲ့
59. Ko Kyi Phyu
60. Sein Yaung So (Sa Kyin)
61. Tree Lover
62. Pyoe Khinn
63. Kachin Farmer Network
64. စီတာပူနှစ်ခြင်းအသင်းတော်
65. သွေးချင်းဧရာဝတီ
66. စီတာပူးနောင်ရွာ
67. ကချင်ပြည်နယ် ဒီမိုကရက်တစ်ပါတီ
68. မန္တလေးကျောင်းတိုက်
69. KSYN
70. စီတာပူနာရေးကူညီမှု
71. NLD
72. တစ်ည ပါတီ
73. RCM
74. စီတာပူအသင်းတော်
75. Karen Students' Center

76. Triangle Women Support Group
77. Gender and Development Initiative Myanmar
78. Myanmar Coalition for Transparency and Spectrum Network
79. Karen Environmental Network
80. Kachin Peace Network
81. Kachin Women Peace Network
82. Chin Natural Resource
83. MIDO Myanmar ICT Development Organization
84. Equality Myanmar
85. Padae Thar Moe
86. IFIwatchmyanmar
87. Ayeyar West Development Organization
88. Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters
89. Community Response Group (ComReG)
90. Chin Natural Resource Watch Committee
91. Federation of Student Unions (Organizing Committee)
92. Gender Equality Network
93. Green Network (Magwawy)
94. Myanmar - China Pipe Line Watch committee
95. Myanmar Coalition for Transparency
96. Nadi Chindwin Myit Min Thalar (Monywa, Sagaing Region)
97. Alinsaytaman
98. Shan New Generation
99. Shwebo Shwe Chintae Social Service Group (Shwebo, Sagaing Region)
100. Village Mobility Working Group
101. Civil Authorize Negotiate
102. Mandalay Youth
103. Generation Wave
104. ရွှေဘိုခရိုင်တောင်သူကွန်ယက်
105. မေတ္တာ Campaign
106. SSSG ရွှေဘို
107. MEE Net
108. အဖွဲ့ချုပ် (ဗ.လ.သ)
109. နွေမိုးဆောင်း
110. Access Youth
111. Myanmar LGBT Rights

112. KSNNG
113. အောင်သုခ
114. KRDA
115. MIDA
116. Thazin Legal
117. ဝံလက်
118. Kyuakpyu Social Network Group
119. Kyuakpyu Rural Development Association
120. AD 2030 Vision
121. Arakan Civic and Rural Development
122. Dawei Development Association
123. Dawei Research Association
124. Tar Ka Paw
125. Dawei Lawyer Group
126. Community Sustainable Livelihood Development
127. Dawei Human Right Watch
128. English for Myanmar Centre
129. ကလုံးထာကျေးရွာဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးကော်မတီ
130. ညင်းမော်ကျေးရွာဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေးကော်မတီ
131. Karen Rivers Watch