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Press Release

**10,000 Shans uprooted, 500 houses burned in Burmese regime's latest scorched earth campaign**

Shan rights organizations today denounced the Burmese military regime's renewed scorched earth campaign in Central Shan State, which has driven an estimated 10,000 villagers from their homes.

According to data compiled by the Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF), the Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) and other Shan community based organizations, since July 27, 2009, the regime's troops have burned down over 500 houses, scores of granaries, and forcibly relocated almost 40 villages, mostly in Laikha township.

Over 100 villagers, both men and women, have been arrested and tortured. At least three villagers have been killed. One young woman was shot while trying to retrieve her possessions from her burning house, and her body thrown into a pit latrine. Another woman was gang-raped in front of her husband by an officer and three of his troops.

"This campaign has been carried out cold-bloodedly and systematically. The troops commandeered petrol to burn down the houses, and radioed repeatedly to their headquarters as the buildings went up in flames," said SHRF Director Kham Harn Fah.

This is the largest forced relocation since 1996-1998, when over 300,000 villagers were uprooted in southern and central Shan State, most of whom have since fled to Thailand. The villagers currently being uprooted had already been relocated during the previous campaign. Most are now seeking shelter with relatives and in temples in nearby towns, but are expected to flee to Thailand in the coming weeks.

The groups, including SHRF, SWAN, the Shan Relief and Development Committee, the Shan Sapawa Environmental Organisation, Shan Youth Power and the Shan Health Committee, are demanding that the military regime immediately stop their atrocities against civilians in Shan State and allow all relocated villagers to return to their homes. They are also calling on the United Nations Security Council to set up a Commission of Enquiry into the regime's crimes against humanity.

"The regime brazenly committed these crimes even as the whole world was watching them during the trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi," said Charm Tong of SWAN. "They are thumbing their noses at the international community."

The groups are also calling on Burma's neighbours, including ASEAN, to end their silence on the regime's atrocities, and seriously review their engagement with this pariah nation. Ironically, this scorched earth campaign began precisely when ASEAN Ministers of Energy were recently meeting in Mandalay.

For detailed information on the recent abuses, see [www.shanwomen.org](http://www.shanwomen.org)

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