



## KACHIN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION THAILAND

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Press release by Kachin Women's Association Thailand

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### **Kachin women demand immediate end to Burmese regime's use of rape as a weapon of war in northern Burma offensive**

The Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT) is demanding an immediate end to the Burmese military regime's widespread use of sexual violence in their offensive against the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in northern Burma.

At least eighteen women and girls have been gang-raped between June 10-18, 2011 during Burma Army advances on KIA strongholds along the China-Burma border. Four of these women were killed after being raped, one in front of her husband, who was tied up and forced to watch. Another woman died from her injuries during rape.

Soldiers from five different battalions (Light Infantry Battalion 437 and Infantry Battalions 237, 141, 142, 139 and 437) committed the rapes, in four townships of Bhamo District.

Two particularly brutal incidents took place on June 18. In Dum Bung village, Mo Mauk township of Bhamo, soldiers of LIB 437 caught three families who had not managed to flee in time. 6 women and girls were gang-raped, and 7 small children killed. In Je Sawn village, Man Si township of Bhamo, soldiers of LIB 139 killed a 7-year-old girl and then gang-raped and killed her grandmother.

"These incidents are not random acts of violence," said KWAT spokesperson Shirley Seng. "The Burma Army is committing gang-rape and killing on a wide scale. It is clear they are acting under orders."

KWAT demands that the regime immediately stops using rape as a weapon of war, ends the offensive against Kachin and other ethnic groups, and withdraws from the ethnic areas.

KWAT is also urging China to provide refuge and humanitarian aid to those fleeing, and to mediate in the conflict.

"The regime is committing atrocities on China's doorstep, and destabilizing the border area," said Shirley Seng. "We believe it is in China's interests to mediate towards a genuine resolution of the political root causes of the conflict."

See attached map and list of details of rape incidents.

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*Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT) is a non profit-making organisation working on behalf of Kachin women. We have a vision of a Kachin State where all forms of discrimination are eliminated; where all women are empowered to participate in decision making at a local, national and international level; and where all Kachin children have the opportunity to fulfill their potential.*