

URGENT ACTION

KACHIN PASTORS MISSING AFTER ASSISTING JOURNALISTS
Two ethnic Kachin pastors, who had been helping journalists report on military abuses in northern Shan State, have been missing since 24 December 2016. Last seen near a Myanmar Army post in Monekoe town, their fate and whereabouts remain unknown.

Dumdaw Nawng Lat, a pastor and community elder from Monekoe town in Muse Township, northern Shan State, was summoned to a nearby army post, to apparently discuss the arrest of a local man, on 24 December 2016. Accompanied by his nephew **Langjaw Gam Seng**, also a pastor in Monekoe, the two men were last seen near the army post, locally known as Byu Har Kone, at around 5pm that evening.

Local sources believe the men may have been detained by Myanmar authorities for their role in organizing a visit by journalists in late November 2016 to Monekoe town. The visit included a tour of the church that, according to Kachin organisations, had been partially destroyed by Myanmar army airstrikes following fierce fighting between the Myanmar Army and the Brotherhood of the Northern Alliance, a new coalition of four armed ethnic groups in northern Myanmar. Access to the area is heavily restricted. Amnesty International is concerned that Dumdaw Nawng Lat and Langjaw Gam Seng may be victims of enforced disappearance.

A missing person's report was filed by relatives with the Muse Township police station on 4 January 2017, however, no information about the fate or whereabouts of the two men has been obtained.

Please write immediately in English, Burmese or your own language urging the Myanmar authorities to:

- Order an immediate and effective investigation with a view to establishing the fate and whereabouts of Dumdaw Nawng Lat and Langjaw Gam Seng's fate, ensuring their safety and providing their families with information;
- If the two men are in state custody, immediately release them, unless they are charged with an internationally recognizable offence and remanded by an independent, civilian court. If this is the case, transfer them to an official place of detention, and ensure that they are treated humanely, allowed effective, prompt and thereafter regular access to their family, lawyers of their own choosing and adequate medical care; and
- Immediately cease violations of international human rights law against ethnic civilians in conflict and ceasefire areas, bring those who have committed violations to justice and ensure that the Myanmar armed forces adhere strictly to the provisions of international humanitarian law and customary international human rights law.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 FEBRUARY 2017 TO:

State Counsellor

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Office No. 9
 Nay Pyi Taw
 Republic of the Union of Myanmar
 Fax: + 95 (0) 67412396

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Home Affairs

Lt. Gen. Kyaw Swe
 Minister of Home Affairs
 Office No. 10, ay Pyi Taw
 Republic of the Union of Myanmar
 Fax: +95 67 412 439
 Email: mohamyanmar@gmail.com

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Chairman, Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

U Win Mra
 27 Pyay Road, Hlaing Township, Yangon
 Republic of the Union of Myanmar
 Fax: + 95 1 659 668
 Email: chmyanmarnhrc@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY KYAW ZWAR MINN , Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 19A Charles Street, London W1J 5DX, General Office 020 7148 0740 / 020 7499 4340, Ambassador's Office 020 7148 0749, ambassadoroffice@myanmarembassylondon.com, political@myanmarembassylondon.com, generalenquiries@myanmarembassylondon.com, salutation: Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Armed conflict between armed ethnic groups and the Myanmar Army in Kachin and northern Shan states has entered its fifth year. Fighting seriously intensified in November 2016 when the Brotherhood of the Northern Alliance, a new coalition of four armed ethnic groups in northern Myanmar, launched coordinated attacks on security outposts. The group said the attacks were in response to ongoing offensives by the Myanmar Army. In response, the Myanmar Army has allegedly been resorting to airstrikes and shelling.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there are over 100,000 people displaced by fighting in Kachin and northern Shan states. However, humanitarian access for UN and other humanitarian agencies and actors to people displaced in areas not under the control of the Myanmar Army is severely restricted.

Human rights abuses have been reportedly committed by both government and ethnic armed groups in areas of conflict, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, kidnapping, arbitrary arrest and torture, forced labour, indiscriminate use of landmines, and recruitment of child soldiers.

However, there remains a persistent culture of impunity for human rights violations committed by the Myanmar security forces, and most perpetrators of past and current violations, including crimes under international law, have not been brought to justice. For instance, five years since Sumlut Roi Ja, a Kachin woman, was detained by the military, her fate and whereabouts remain unknown. She was subjected to enforced disappearance in October 2011 in Kachin state after being detained by Myanmar Army soldiers along with her husband and father-in-law who managed to escape. To date, no-one has been held to account.

An enforced disappearance typically occurs when state agents arrest or abduct a person but then refuse to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or conceal the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, placing him or her outside the protection of the law. Once out of the public eye, individuals subjected to enforced disappearance are at great risk of torture, other ill-treatment, and death. Enforced disappearances are a violation of host of international human rights treaties, including the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It is also a crime under international law.

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