



Genocide Emergency: Kachin State

04 April 2013

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Fighting in Myanmar's Kachin state pits the Kachin Independence Army and its majority Christian population against the Burmese Buddhist government. Ethnic Shan in Kachin State have also been displaced.

Kachin State

In 1994, the Burmese government reached a peace agreement with the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) ending large-scale conflict between the two parties in the jade-rich territory. KIO maintained effective control, and political tension remained high for the next 17 years. In June 2011, that ceasefire agreement was shattered and fighting once again broke out between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and Burmese government when the government attacked KIA forces near a hydropower plant. Fighting since has been non-stop.

The government says it only attacks in self-defense. However, it appears that the government is trying to capture KIA headquarters in Laiza. The line of command for attacks is ambiguous since the creation of the new democratic government, and it is unclear whether many of the attacks are directed by the central government or are occurring on the basis of local government action. Government attacks on Kachin villages have intensified since December 2012.

[Human Rights Watch](#) estimates that since the attacks have begun, over 75,000 Kachins have been forced to flee their homes looking for refuge. Attacks include raids and burnings of villages and rapes and murders. Many Kachin have fled to China, only to be deported.

[On January 19, 2013, President Thein Sein declared a ceasefire](#), which was immediately [broken by his own army](#). The two groups – KIA and the government – met for peace talks in February 2013, but tensions remain and there has been no stop to the violence. Tens of thousands of Shan Buddhists have also been displaced from Kachin state since June 2011. About 300,000 of Kachin State's 1.2 million residents are Shan. Kachin Christians also face discrimination. It is estimated that over 100,000 Kachins have been displaced as a direct result of the fighting.

Relief groups from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the World Food Program (WFP) entered remote areas of the Kachin state to provide aid – in the form of supplies and relief workers – in late February. The UN had talks with the government to ensure that aid workers would be safe.

Genocide Watch has issued an updated Genocide Emergency Alert for the Kachin State of Myanmar.

Genocide Watch recommends that the following actions be taken immediately:

- Myanmar authorities should cease human rights violations and violent attacks against the Shans and Kachins;
- Myanmar authorities should abide by a ceasefire agreement with the Kachin Independence Army and ensure it is maintained by government military forces in the Kachin State;
- China should adhere to its obligations under the UN Convention on the Protection of Refugees by accepting refugees from the Kachin State, permitting them to settle in refugee camps until they can safely return without threat from Myanmar government military forces.