

## **Karen Rivers Watch Statement on the International Day of Action for Rivers and Against Dams**

**Saturday - March 14, 2015**



### **Halt All Dams Now in Salween River and all ethnic areas – Protests At Dam Sites**

On the International Day of Action for Rivers and Against Dams, Karen Rivers Watch renews its call for the suspension of all dam projects in Karen State and other ethnic states.

Karen Rivers Watch is joining local people protesting at sites where dams are being constructed or planned.

The Burmese government is planning dozens of dams across Burma, mostly in ethnic states which are or have recently been conflict zones.

Concerns about the construction of these dams include:

- Undermining the peace process and increasing conflict as Burmese Army breaks ceasefires to control planned dam sites
- Lack of consultation with local populations and no provision of relevant information
- Decades of displacement and seizure of land without compensation
- Destruction of the local environment
- Militarisation when Burmese Army and its proxies move to occupy areas near dam sites leading to increased human rights violations
- Energy generated to supply to neighbouring countries and industries rather than local populations
- Revenue from dams going to central government, which spends more on military than any other area, rather than benefitting local people
- Increased risk of rape and sexual violence where Burmese Army provides security for dam sites
- Unacceptable risk of dam cascade failure from earthquake or flood
- Dams are not the most cost effective or environmentally sustainable way of supplying electricity to the people of Burma

Karen Rivers Watch is calling for all dams projects to be suspended. No major development projects should take place in Karen State and other ethnic states until there is genuine peace based on a political settlement. Local populations must also be properly consulted about any projects.

Nationally, a thorough review of Burma's energy requirements must take place, based on providing sustainable environmentally friendly energy that reaches all people, not just those in cities and large towns.

Rights for those opposing dams and other large development projects must also be guaranteed. Those protesting against dams today still face the risk of arrest and imprisonment.

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