BURMA BULLETIN

A month-in-review of events in Burma

ALTERNATIVE ASEAN NETWORK ON BURMA
campaigns, advocacy & capacity-building for human rights & democracy

Issue 86 **February 2014**

- **The regime uses the antiquated and oppressive 1923 Official Secrets Act to detain four journalists who reported on a weapons factory.**
- **The regime Information Ministry imposes visa restrictions on foreign journalists working at former exile media groups.**
- **Naypyidaw takes no further action on the reported deaths and injuries of Rohingya in Arakan State's Du Chee Yar Tan Village after the regime-Human Rights Commission fails to properly investigate the violence that began on 9 January.**
- **At President Thein Sein's request, authorities interrogate USDP People's Assembly MP Shwe Maung, for making allegations about police involvement in the 28 January fire in Du Chee Yar Tan.**
- **The regime suspends Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) operations in apparent retaliation for the humanitarian organization's confirmation that there were casualties in the violence at Du Chee Yar Tan.**
- **President Thein Sein directs Parliament to discuss the notorious proposal to restrict interfaith marriage.**
- **The upcoming national census draws resistance from ethnic groups and civil society.**
- **Parliament forms another constitutional review committee, to carry forward the work of the first committee formed seven months earlier (which made no progress on key reforms).**
- **Parliament fails to approve significant amendments on the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration law.**
- **No nationwide ceasefire talks occur in February, but Tatmadaw intensifies military offensives against the KIA in Kachin State, and continues against the SSA-S and the TNLA in Shan State.**
- **Local police detain eight people in Sagaing Division for protesting against land confiscation for the Monywa (Letpadaung) copper mine project.**
- **Burma fails to improve its rating with the Financial Action Task Force on money Laundering (FATF) despite rushing ahead with legislation.**
- **Tomás Ojea Quintana makes his final visit as UN Special Rapporteur on human rights to Burma, expressing concern over challenges which "could jeopardize the entire reform process."**
- **Thailand traffics displaced Rohingya while Bangladesh pushes them back to Burma.**

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KEY STORY

Regime detains, prosecutes four journalists

In February, the regime filed criminal charges against four journalists under the outdated 1923 Official Secrets Act, in connection with the publication of a piece of investigative journalism. On 31 January, police from Pauk Township, Magwe Division, arrested Unity Weekly journal reporter Lu Maw Naing for the publication of an article on 25 January which claimed that the military had a secret chemical weapons factory in Pauk Township, Magwe Division.[1] On 1 February, police officers arrested Unity Weekly CEO Tint San and three more Unity Weekly journalists, Yarzar Oo, Paing Thet Kyaw, and Sithu Soe on the same charges.[2] Police held them for questioning in Rangoon's Insein Prison.[3] The regime denied the five their right of access to a lawyer for several days.[4] On 14 February, the four journalists and CEO stood trial in Pakokku District Court, Magwe Division.[5] They could face up to 14 years in jail if convicted.[6]

The arrest and detention of the five media workers sparked condemnation from local and international media organizations, who called for their immediate release.[7]

Regime restricts visas for foreign journalist, bans writers from literary talks

On 13 February, it was reported that since early February, the regime Information Ministry had imposed visa restrictions on foreign journalists who worked at former exile media groups, including Irrawaddy and Democratic Voice of Burma.[8]

On 13 February, President Thein Sein's spokesman Ye Htut said that foreign journalists providing "occasional news coverage" in Burma would now only be granted visas of up to one month, as opposed to the three-month visas they were previously granted.[9] The changes in visa regulations come just weeks after foreign news outlets such as AP, Irrawaddy, Voice of America, Myanmar Times, and Mizzima News reported on the killing of at least 48 Muslim Rohingya in Du Chee Yar Tan Village, Maungdaw Township, Arakan State [See *January 2014 Burma Bulletin*].

The regime and extremist Buddhist monks restricted freedom of speech at several events across Burma in February.[10]

- **4 February**: A township administration officer banned writers Nyi Pu Kalay, Maung Sein Win, and U Phone from speaking publicly at a literary event in Pyawbwe Township, Mandalay Division.[11]
- **12 February**: Thirty monks from the Patriotic Burmese Monks Union (PBMU) forced the cancellation of a literary function organized by the NLD in Rangoon's North Okkalapa Township,

[1] DVB (03 Feb 14) Journalists arrested after publication of Chemical Weapons story; Irrawaddy (02 Feb 14) Journalists Detained for Reporting Alleged Burmese Chemical Weapons Factory
[2] DVB (03 Feb 14) Journalists arrested after publication of Chemical Weapons story; Irrawaddy (02 Feb 14) Journalists Detained for Reporting Alleged Burmese Chemical Weapons Factory
[3] DVB (03 Feb 14) Journalists arrested after publication of Chemical Weapons story; Irrawaddy (02 Feb 14) Journalists Detained for Reporting Alleged Burmese Chemical Weapons Factory
[4] EMG (12 Feb 14) Unity Journal CEO receives lawyer after 10 days of detention
[5] NLM (16 Feb 14) Alleged offenders in connection with Unity Journal's report of Secret Chemical Weapon Factory brought to court
[6] RFA (04 Feb 14) Release Sought for Myanmar Journalists Held Over Chemical Weapons Report; DVB (04 Feb 14) Journalists remain in prison
[7] DVB (07 Feb 14) Burmese media groups condemn Unity Weekly arrests; DPA (04 Feb 14) Myanmar media groups blast arrests of journalists; CPJ (03 Feb 14) Burma holds 4 journalists for chemical weapons report; RSF (04 Feb 14) Four journalists facing possible 14-year jail terms on state secrets charge; AFP (07 Feb 14) International Federation of Journalists slams arrest of five journalists in Myanmar
[8] Irrawaddy (13 Feb 14) Journalists Raise Alarm Over Shorter Visas in Burma
[9] Mizzima News (14 Feb 14) Foreign journalists to get one-month visas; RFA (14 Feb 14) Myanmar Puts New Restrictions on Visas for Foreign Journalists
[10] RFA (20 Feb 14) Myanmar President's Office Concerned Over Disruption of Literary Events; EMG (14 Feb 14) Ministry of Culture pulls plug on Litfest at last minute; Irrawaddy (14 Feb 14) Denied Pagoda Venue, Literary Festival Kicks Off at Mandalay Hotel; DVB (14 Feb 14) NLD cancels literary event after pressure over Muslim speakers; Mizzima News (19 Feb 14) Warning issued over disruptions to public talks
[11] RFA (20 Feb 14) Myanmar President's Office Concerned Over Disruption of Literary Events

because two of the speakers, 88 Generation Student Mya Aye and NLD member Ko Ni, were Muslim.[12]

- **15 February**: Objections from monks forced 88 Generation Student Mya Aye to be replaced as a speaker at a public lecture to commemorate General Aung San in Mandalay.[13]

Burma's press reforms "out of steam"

On 12 February, Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) released its "World Press Freedom Index 2014," which ranked Burma 145th out of 180 countries.[14] Despite a slight improvement from its rank of 151st out of 179 in 2013, the report said Burma's reforms had "run out of steam" and that the regime failed to implement any media legislation that complies with international standards.[15]

INSIDE BURMA

Regime investigations into Du Chee Yar Tan Village inadequate

In February, the regime continued to conduct contrived and biased investigations into the violence that began on 9 January in Du Chee Yar Tan Village, Maungdaw Township, Arakan State [See *January 2013 Burma Bulletin*].

On 3 February, a four-member team from the regime Human Rights Commission (HRC) conducted a five-day fact-finding mission to the area in response to pressure from the international community.[16] On 14 February, the HRC issued a post-mission statement that concluded that reports of violence in Du Chee Yar Tan Village were "unverifiable and unconfirmed".[17]

The commission said that there was no evidence to confirm the reported deaths of 48 Rohingya or that Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) had treated 22 people injured in the violence.[18] The commission also came to the bizarre conclusion that Arakan police should be supplied with better weapons.[19]

On 6 February, President Thein Sein issued an order for a new 10-member investigatory commission to selectively probe the violence in Du Chee Yar Tan Village.[20] The presidential order limited the commission's inquiry to the death of police Sgt Aung Kyaw and the "false and groundless reports" surrounding a fire that broke out in Du Chee Yar Tan Village on 28 January.[21] President Thein Sein did not task the new commission with investigating the reports of lethal violence against Rohingya.[22] On 15 February, the 10-member commission began a six-day investigation, touring villages in the area and meeting with UN and NGO representatives.[23] The commission was expected to report its findings on 28 February, however no reports appeared in local media as of 1 March.[24]

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[12] RFA (20 Feb 14) Myanmar President's Office Concerned Over Disruption of Literary Events; DVB (14 Feb 14) NLD cancels literary event after pressure over Muslim speakers
[13] Mizzima News (19 Feb 14) Warning issued over disruptions to public talks
[14] RSF (12 Feb 14) World Press Freedom Index 2014; DVB (12 Feb 14) Report shows scepticism over Burma's press freedom
[15] RSF (12 Feb 14) World Press Freedom Index 2014; DVB (12 Feb 14) Report shows scepticism over Burma's press freedom
[16] NLM (15 Feb 14) Statement No. (2/2014) of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission regarding findings of Commission Team from its investigation of the incident at Ducheeratan village-tract
[17] NLM (15 Feb 14) Statement No. (2/2014) of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission regarding findings of Commission Team from its investigation of the incident at Ducheeratan village-tract
[18] NLM (15 Feb 14) Statement No. (2/2014) of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission regarding findings of Commission Team from its investigation of the incident at Ducheeratan village-tract
[19] Mizzima News (06 Feb 14) Rakhine probe team urges police weapons upgrade
[20] EMG (08 Feb 14) Investigation commission for Du Chee Yar Tan incident to report at the end of this month; RFA (07 Feb 14) Myanmar President Orders Commission to Probe Rakhine Violence; DVB (07 Feb 14) Maungdaw investigation to overlook allegations of Rohingya massacre
[21] EMG (08 Feb 14) Investigation commission for Du Chee Yar Tan incident to report at the end of this month; RFA (07 Feb 14) Myanmar President Orders Commission to Probe Rakhine Violence; DVB (07 Feb 14) Maungdaw investigation to overlook allegations of Rohingya massacre
[22] EMG (08 Feb 14) Investigation commission for Du Chee Yar Tan incident to report at the end of this month; RFA (07 Feb 14) Myanmar President Orders Commission to Probe Rakhine Violence
[23] Irrawaddy (17 Feb 14) MSF, Human Rights Commission at Odds Over Maungdaw Violence
[24] EMG (08 Feb 14) Investigation commission for Du Chee Yar Tan incident to report at the end of this month; RFA (07 Feb 14) Myanmar President Orders Commission to Probe Rakhine Violence; DVB (07 Feb 14) Maungdaw investigation to overlook allegations of Rohingya massacre

On 19 February, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana said the regime's investigations had "failed to satisfactorily address" the allegations of violence in Du Chee Yar Tan Village.[25] He also warned that if President Thein Sein's new investigative commission did not carry out a credible investigation, he would "urge the involvement" of the UN Human Rights Council to "uncover the truth of what happened" and hold human rights violators accountable.[26]

Regime takes punitive action, suspends MSF activities in Burma

The regime took punitive action against Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) who discredited the regime's version of the violence in Du Chee Yar Tan Village, Maungdaw Township, Arakan State. MSF stood by their report that they had treated 22 injured people in the days following the violence.[27]

On 27 February, MSF received orders from Arakan State authorities to cease operations in Arakan State.[28] In compliance, on 28 February, MSF closed all their HIV/AIDS clinics in Rangoon Division and Arakan, Shan, and Kachin States for the first time in MSF's history in Burma.[29]

On 28 February, President Thein Sein's spokesman Ye Htut said MSF were being suspended because their MoU to operate in Burma expired in January 2013, and that the decision was based on the fact that MSF broke their agreement with the regime by employing more foreign staff than was allowed, providing more than basic health care – including maternity clinics in Arakan State, and giving Rohingya "preferential treatment".[30] Ye Htut also said that MSF's activities were "fueling tensions" and were detrimental to the "rule of law" and "regional stability," referencing MSF's "unsupported" reports that it treated injured people following the violence in Du Chee Yar Tan Village.[31]

On 27 February, MSF Head of Mission in Burma Peter Paul de Groote confirmed that MSF is currently in negotiations with regime Health Ministry to finalize a new MoU.[32] On 28 February, President Thein Sein's spokesman Ye Htut also confirmed the two parties were negotiating a new MoU, but only for the provision of healthcare in Arakan State.[33]

Arakan State MP to be "held responsible" for defamation of the state

On 4 February, upon a request from President Thein Sein, police in Naypyidaw interrogated Rohingya USDP People's Assembly MP Shwe Maung aka Abdu Rawzek for suggesting the complicity of police in a fire that broke out in Du Chee Yar Tan Village on 28 January.[34] After the fire broke out, USDP People's Assembly MP Shwe Maung reported that residents of Du Chee Yar Tan Village, Maungdaw Township, Arakan State had seen police setting fire to their homes.[35]

On 5 February, President Thein Sein's spokesman Ye Htut said Shwe Maung may be "held responsible for defamation and provoking tension" between Buddhist Rakhine and Muslim Rohingya.[36]

Parliament's ninth session continues

In February, Parliament continued its ninth regular session. Important developments included:

[25] RFA (19 Feb 14) UN Envoy Calls for 'Trust-Building' Between Myanmar Government, Ethnic Rebels
[26] RFA (19 Feb 14) UN Envoy Calls for 'Trust-Building' Between Myanmar Government, Ethnic Rebels
[27] DVB (28 Feb 14) MSF face expulsion from Burma
[28] MSF (01 Mar 14) Myanmar: MSF to resume HIV/AIDS and all other activities in Kachin, Shan, and Yangon but concerns remain
[29] AP (28 Feb 14) Doctors Without Borders expelled from Myanmar; Myanmar Times (28 Feb 14) MSF ordered out of Rakhine State; MSF (01 Mar 14) Myanmar: MSF to resume HIV/AIDS and all other activities in Kachin, Shan, and Yangon but concerns remain
[30] Myanmar Times (28 Feb 14) MSF ordered out of Rakhine State; Mizzima News (28 Feb 14) MSF declines to comment on Rakhine State expulsion order; Irrawaddy (28 Feb 14) Burma Suspends All Aid Operations of MSF
[31] DVB (28 Feb 14) MSF face expulsion from Burma
[32] DVB (28 Feb 14) MSF face expulsion from Burma
[33] Mizzima News (28 Feb 14) MSF declines to comment on Rakhine State expulsion order
[34] Myanmar Times (07 Feb 14) Rohingya MP U Shwe Maung undergoes questioning
[35] Mizzima News (05 Feb 14) Home Affairs officials question MP over arson claim
[36] DVB (05 Feb 14) Shwe Maung may be 'responsible for defamation' over police allegations, says Ye Htut

- **5 February**: It was reported that the People's Assembly had failed to approve the Media Bill [See *November 2013 Burma Bulletin*], requesting that Article 32, a clause requiring the search of offices and confiscation of media equipment to be conducted in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedures, be removed.[37]
- **11 February**: The National Assembly approved the Anti-Money Laundering Bill.[38] The bill was prioritized ahead of the 12-14 February Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meeting in Paris [See *January 2013 Burma Bulletin*].
- **14 February**: The People's Assembly approved the Association Bill [See *November 2013 Burma Bulletin*].[39] This was the second draft of the bill which was introduced to the People's Assembly in November 2013, and replaced a previous version drafted by the regime Home Affairs Ministry [See *November 2013 Burma Bulletin*].
- **19 February**: People's Assembly USDP MP Aung Ko introduced new amendments to the bill introduced in November 2013 to amend the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law [See *November 2013 Burma Bulletin*].[40] However, the new amendments only reduced the jail term for violations of Article 18 of the law from one year to six months and retained the requirement for protest applications, adding that an application can be rejected on "reasonable" grounds.[41]

The passage of the Anti-Money Laundering Bill was prioritized and pushed through in order to improve Burma's listing by the FATF. However, this failed to convince the FATF, who said that Burma had made insufficient progress in implementing its action plan and still had deficiencies in combating money laundering and financing terrorism.[42]

Thein Sein expedites enactment of draft proposal restricting interfaith marriage

In February, the regime continued to promote the extremist Buddhist anti-Muslim agenda, giving their support to a draft proposal restricting interfaith marriage [See *June 2013 Burma Bulletin*] spearheaded by the newly-formed extremist Buddhist Organization for the Protection of National Race and Religion (OPNRR).[43] On 25 February, President Thein Sein sent a letter to National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann urging National Parliament MPs to discuss it, in an attempt to expedite the enactment of the discriminatory proposal.[44]

On 27 February, National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann sent sections of the draft proposal to relevant ministries to be rewritten as bills, according to standard procedure, before submission to Parliament.[45]

Another constitutional review committee formed

Seven months since the formation of the 109-member constitutional review committee in July 2013 [See *July 2013 Burma Bulletin*], the USDP-dominated Parliament and commissions have failed to make progress in regard to important constitutional amendments. On 3 February, the National Parliament approved the formation of a new 31-member parliamentary committee tasked with reviewing the compilation of suggested amendments of the 109-member constitutional review committee.[46]

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[37] DVB (05 Feb 14) Media Bill stuck in Parliament
[38] NLM (12 Feb 14) Arrangements being made for winners in entrance exams to have opportunities to attend BTech, BE
[39] NLM (15 Feb 14) No reply for release of Myanmar inmates in Thai prisons
[40] Myanmar Times (24 Feb 14) Govt waters down protest reforms; Irrawaddy (21 Feb 14) Proposal to Keep Punishment for Unauthorized Protest Draws Criticism
[41] Myanmar Times (24 Feb 14) Govt waters down protest reforms; Irrawaddy (21 Feb 14) Proposal to Keep Punishment for Unauthorized Protest Draws Criticism; AI (21 Feb 14) Myanmar: Token and insignificant changes to repressive anti-protest law
[42] FATF (14 Feb 14) FATF Public Statement - 14 February 2014
[43] Myanmar Times (27 Feb 14) Speaker sends four religion-focused laws back to government; RFA (15 Jan 14) Myanmar Buddhist Monks Launch Group for 'Defending Religion'
[44] RFA (27 Feb 14) Myanmar Leader Backs Buddhist Monks' Calls for Laws to 'Protect' Religion, Race
[45] RFA (27 Feb 14) Myanmar Leader Backs Buddhist Monks' Calls for Laws to 'Protect' Religion, Race; Irrawaddy (27 Feb 14) Thein Sein Asks Parliament to Discuss Interfaith Marriage; Myanmar Times (27 Feb 14) Speaker sends four religion-focused laws back to government
[46] Mizzima News (03 Feb 14) Hluttaw's constitutional implementation committee announced; Xinhua (03 Feb 14) Myanmar parliament forms committee for implementation of constitution amendment; EMG (05 Feb 14) Parliament establishes implementation committee to amend constitution; NLM (04 Feb 14) Pyidaungsu Hluttaw forms implementation committee for constitutional amendment- Modified version of textbooks to be used in basic education school as of 2014-15 Academic Year

The first committee submitted its report to Parliament on 31 January.[47] [See *January 2013 Burma Bulletin*]. The new 31-member committee will submit a separate report to Parliament with recommendations for constitutional amendments.[48] The committee, made up of 11 USDP MPs and seven military MPs, included only two NLD MPs and only a handful of MPs from ethnic parties.[49]

Tatmadaw offensives intensify against KIA

On 6 February, it was reported that no nationwide ceasefire talks would take place between the regime and ethnic armed groups until March as ethnic groups need more time to prepare.[50] Meanwhile, Tatmadaw troops increased military offensives against the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Kachin and Northern Shan States.[51]

- **6 February**: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 601 and IBs 276 and 237 captured a KIA post in Gawng Run Village, Mansi Township, Southern Kachin State.[52]
- **7 February**: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 602 attacked KIA Battalion 12 forces in Mansi Township, Kachin State.[53]
- **10 February**: Tatmadaw troops from LIBs 261 and 421 clashed with Kachin People's Militia (a militia force affiliated with the KIA) near Ja Ing Yang Village, Bhamo Township, Kachin State.[54]
- **10 February**: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 261 attacked KIA troops at Hka Mazup Village, close to Laiza, Momauk Township, Kachin State.[55]
- **11 February**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA Battalion 18 and Kachin People's Militia and captured a KIA post near Ja Ing Yang Village, Bhamo Township, Southern Kachin State.[56]
- **12 February**: Tatmadaw troops attacked the Kachin People's Militia and seized Hpung Maw Post near Laiza, Momauk Township, Kachin State.[57]
- **12 February**: Tatmadaw troops from IB 261 and LIBs 421, 424, 425, and 426 attacked and burned a KIA post near Hka-U Village, Bhamo Township, Southern Kachin State.[58] Tatmadaw troops went on to attack KIA forces in the nearby area.[59]
- **12 February**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA forces near Ja Ing Yang Village, Bhamo Township, Kachin State.[60]
- **22 February**: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 241 clashed with KIA Battalion 36 near Nam Gut Village, Northern Shan State.[61]
- **24 February**: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 123 clashed with KIA Battalion 9 in Northern Shan State, and Tatmadaw troops from LIB 241 clashed with KIA Battalion 36 between Gyu Mwi and Ba Hpang Villages, Muse Township, Northern Shan State.[62]
- **26 February**: Tatmadaw troops from LIB 6 attacked and captured a KIO administrative office in Hpakant Township, Kachin State.[63]

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[47] NLM (01 Feb 14) Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves Japanese Yen 63.2 billion of ODA loan
[48] Xinhua (03 Feb 14) Myanmar parliament forms committee for implementation of constitution amendment; Xinhua (17 Feb 14) Myanmar opposition, former students group to cooperate on amending constitution
[49] Myanmar Times (09 Feb 14) NLD leader backs new constitution review body
[50] DVB (06 Feb 14) Hpa-an peace talks postponed until March
[51] Kachin News Group (07 Feb 14) Burma army takes another KIA post in southern Kachin state; Kachin News Group (10 Feb 14) KIA soldier dies resisting Burma army attack; Kachinland News (11 Feb 14) Battles Rage as a New Offensive Begins near Laiza; Irrawaddy (12 Feb 14) President's Union Day Message Flags-up Federalism; Kachin News Group (13 Feb 14) Burma army captures posts near KIO's Laiza capital; Kachinland News (13 Feb 14) Burmese Army Continues Offensive Operations Against Kachin Independence Army; Irrawaddy (13 Feb 14) Burma Army Launches Deadly Incursion Into Kachin Rebel Territory; Irrawaddy (17 Feb 14) After Attacks, Kachin Rebels Must Rethink Peace Process: Gun Maw; Kachinland News (25 Feb 14) Battles Rage in Northern Shan State
[52] Kachin News Group (07 Feb 14) Burma army takes another KIA post in southern Kachin state
[53] Kachin News Group (10 Feb 14) KIA soldier dies resisting Burma army attack
[54] Kachinland News (11 Feb 14) Battles Rage as a New Offensive Begins near Laiza; Irrawaddy (12 Feb 14) President's Union Day Message Flags-up Federalism
[55] Kachinland News (11 Feb 14) Battles Rage as a New Offensive Begins near Laiza
[56] Kachin News Group (13 Feb 14) Burma army captures posts near KIO's Laiza capital
[57] Kachinland News (13 Feb 14) Burmese Army Continues Offensive Operations Against Kachin Independence Army
[58] Kachin News Group (13 Feb 14) Burma army captures posts near KIO's Laiza capital
[59] Kachinland News (13 Feb 14) Burmese Army Continues Offensive Operations Against Kachin Independence Army
[60] Irrawaddy (13 Feb 14) Burma Army Launches Deadly Incursion Into Kachin Rebel Territory
[61] Kachinland News (25 Feb 14) Battles Rage in Northern Shan State
[62] Kachinland News (25 Feb 14) Battles Rage in Northern Shan State
[63] KLN (28 Feb 14) Burmese Army Seized KIO's Se Zin County Administrative Office

Tatmadaw offensives continue in Shan State

Tatmadaw troops continued offensives against the Shan State Army-South (SSA-S) and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) in Shan State.[64]

- **7 February**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with SSA-S troops near Kyaukme, Kyaukme Township, Northern Shan State.[65]
- **10 February**: Tatmadaw troops from LIBs 505 and 506 clashed with TNLA forces near Nam Yang Village, Mantong Township, Northern Shan State.[66]
- **11 February**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA forces in Mantong and Namhsan Townships, Northern Shan State.[67]
- **23-24 February**: Tatmadaw troops from LIBs 519 and 522 and an ethnic Lahu Border Guard Force unit attacked SSA-S soldiers traveling through Mongton Township, Shan State.[68]
- **24 February**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA forces in Manpein Village, Namkham Township, Northern Shan State.[69]
- **26 February**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA Battalion 367 near Shubain Village, Mongmit Township, Northern Shan State.[70]
- **27 February**: Tatmadaw troops clashed with TNLA forces at Panphyat Village, Kyaukme Township, Shan State.[71]

National census brings criticism and division

The upcoming national census, scheduled for 30 March to 10 April, continued to draw resistance and criticism from ethnic groups, individuals, and civil society organizations. They warned that the census could have political repercussions because of the categorization methodology.[72] The constitution and election laws only provide local government representation for ethnic groups that meet certain population limits, causing some groups to worry they will be assimilated into others and therefore be denied identity and political representation.[73] In addition, analysts voiced concern that the 1983 census underreported the number of Muslims in Burma, so the results of the current census may show a perceived threefold increase, which could confirm the radical idea that Burma is being overrun by Muslims and fuel violence against them.[74] The groups who voiced concern over the census included: Transnational Institute (TNI), ICG, and Burma Campaign UK.[75]

- **2 February**: The Nationalities Brotherhood Federation (NBF) released a statement urging the regime to review its census procedures.[76] The NBF warned that the census classification of ethnic groups and sub-groups could lead to "disintegration of unity among ethnic nationalities."[77]

[64] Kachin News Group (10 Feb 14) KIA soldier dies resisting Burma army attack; Irrawaddy (12 Feb 14) President's Union Day Message Flags-up Federalism; Kachinland News (11 Feb 14) Battles Rage as a New Offensive Begins near Laiza; Myanmar Times (11 Feb 14) SSA-S not concerned about western military engaging with Tatmadaw; DVB (26 Feb 14) Burma Army clashes with SSA-S, TNLA in Shan State; Irrawaddy (25 Feb 14) Burma Army, Shan Rebels Clash Over Temporary Camp
[65] Myanmar Times (11 Feb 14) SSA-S not concerned about western military engaging with Tatmadaw
[66] Irrawaddy (12 Feb 14) President's Union Day Message Flags-up Federalism; Kachinland News (11 Feb 14) Battles Rage as a New Offensive Begins near Laiza
[67] Kachin News Group (10 Feb 14) KIA soldier dies resisting Burma army attack
[68] DVB (26 Feb 14) Burma Army clashes with SSA-S, TNLA in Shan State; Irrawaddy (25 Feb 14) Burma Army, Shan Rebels Clash Over Temporary Camp
[69] EMG (27 Feb 14) Two skirmishes break out in Shan State
[70] KLN (28 Feb 14) Burmese Army Seized KIO's Se Zin County Administrative Office
[71] EMG (01 Mar 14) Skirmishes continue between TNLA, gov't
[72] ICG (12 Feb 14) Myanmar Conflict Alert: A Risky Census; Irrawaddy (13 Feb 14) Burma Urged to Drop Census Questions on Ethnicity, Religion; Kachin News Group (03 Feb 14) Alliance of ethnic political parties slam Burma national census
[73] Irrawaddy (10 Feb 14) Burma's Ethnic Minorities Decry Census, Jostle for Advantage; ICG (12 Feb 14) Myanmar Conflict Alert: A Risky Census; Kachin News Group (03 Feb 14) Alliance of ethnic political parties slam Burma national census
[74] ICG (12 Feb 14) Myanmar Conflict Alert: A Risky Census
[75] Reuters (26 Feb 14) Critics worry Myanmar census could be fiasco, worsening ethnic repression and persecution
[76] Kachin News Group (03 Feb 14) Alliance of ethnic political parties slam Burma national census
[77] Kachin News Group (03 Feb 14) Alliance of ethnic political parties slam Burma national census

- **10 February**: Ethnic Chin activists called for a 30-day delay of the census in a letter to President Thein Sein, regime Immigration and Population Minister Khin Yi, and the Chairman of the Central Census Commission.[78]
- **17 February**: Over 30 ethnic-based political parties and civil society organizations released a statement calling on the regime to revise the details and number of ethnic groups in Burma before the national census begins.[79]
- **17 February**: It was reported that the Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF) objected to the listing of Ta'ang (another name for Palaung) as a Shan sub-group.[80]
- **18 February**: It was reported that 23 Kachin civic groups sent letters to President Thein Sein and People's Assembly Speaker Shwe Mann calling for the census to be postponed.[81]
- **18 February**: It was reported that Kachin prominent activist Khon Ja vowed to impede the census if it is executed without first consulting civil society organizations that represent ethnic populations.[82]

The regime responded with indifference, refusing to compromise.[83] On 10 February, at a press conference in Rangoon, regime Immigration and Population Minister Khin Yi said the census would be held based on international standards.[84] Khin Yi also said that while people would be allowed to report themselves as 'Rohingya' they would not be recognized citizens.[85] On 27 February representatives from 10 ethnic organizations met with Khin Yi and agreed to wait until after the census was held to voice their concerns about ethnic group categorization.[86]

Regime authorities charge, detain, and arrest anti-land confiscation protestors

The regime continued to charge, detain, and arrest activists protesting against land confiscation.

- **3 February**: Local authorities charged four organizers of a land dispute protest under Article 18 of the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law in Myingyan Township, Mandalay Division.[87]
- **5 February**: About 30 residents demonstrated in a bid to stop nearly 1,000 police and staff from China's Wanbao mining company from expanding fences onto land that had not been confiscated for the expansion of the Monywa (Letpadaung) copper mine in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division.[88] This led to a confrontation between police and protesters.[89] Local police temporarily detained protesters Thwe Thwe Win, Ma Sein, Ye Cho, Ar No, Myint Naing Win, Thaik Tun Shwe, Phyu Phyu Win, and Hse Tin.[90]
- **11 February**: Local authorities arrested six farmers who were attending their court hearing about a land dispute case from 2013 in Padaung Township, Pegu Division.[91]
- **11 February**: Local authorities charged four farmers from Aungon Village, Thegon Township, Pegu Division, under Article 18 of the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law for organizing a protest to demand the return of land confiscated by the military in 2000, according to local-land rights group Nattalin People's Network.[92] On 12 February, the four were released on bail.[93]

[78] Irrawaddy (13 Feb 14) Burma Urged to Drop Census Questions on Ethnicity, Religion
[79] DVB (18 Feb 14) Ethnic groups resist census, object to question of ethnicity
[80] Myanmar Times (17 Feb 14) More ethnic groups express concern over minority codes
[81] DVB (18 Feb 14) Ethnic groups resist census, object to question of ethnicity
[82] DVB (18 Feb 14) Ethnic groups resist census, object to question of ethnicity
[83] Mizzima News (14 Feb 14) Government dismisses call to postpone census
[84] Xinhua (11 Feb 14) Myanmar calls on national people for answering census questions correctly
[85] EMG (13 Feb 14) No code name for Rohingya in census – Minister
[86] DVB (27 Feb 14) Ten ethnic organisations accept current census platform; NLM (28 Feb 14) Union Immigration & Population Minister clarifies national census to ethnic organizations
[87] Myanmar Times (05 Feb 14) Four charged over land protest
[88] Irrawaddy (05 Feb 14) Eight Detained as Opposition to Burma's Letpadaung Copper Mine Continues; EMG (06 Feb 14) Eight rural people detained by police in Letpadaungtaung
[89] EMG (06 Feb 14) Eight rural people detained by police in Letpadaungtaung
[90] EMG (06 Feb 14) Eight rural people detained by police in Letpadaungtaung
[91] Irrawaddy (13 Feb 14) 6 Farmers Apprehended, 7 Facing Arrest in Pegu Land Disputes
[92] Irrawaddy (13 Feb 14) 6 Farmers Apprehended, 7 Facing Arrest in Pegu Land Disputes; AAPP (27 Feb 14) Update Total Facing Trial List
[93] Irrawaddy (13 Feb 14) 6 Farmers Apprehended, 7 Facing Arrest in Pegu Land Disputes; AAPP (27 Feb 14) Update Total Facing Trial List

- **11 February**: Plain-clothed police officers arrested activist Thaw Zin in connection with two alleged confrontations in 2013 between local residents and Chinese company Wanbao staff-members, in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division.[94]
- **17 February**: It was reported that police had charged four Letpadaung villagers under Article 18 of the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law, following a demonstration in front of a local police station the previous week. The group was demanding the release of prominent Letpadaung activist Thaw Zin.[95]

HUMAN RIGHTS

UN: "Serious challenges" could jeopardize Burma's reform process

On 13 February, Tomás Ojea Quintana arrived in Rangoon for a six-day visit to the country, his final mission as UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma.[96] Ojea Quintana traveled to Akyab [Sittwe] in Arakan State; Myitkyina and Laiza in Kachin State; Thilawa Special Economic Zone in Rangoon Division; and the Monywa copper mine in Sagaing Division.[97] In Naypyidaw, the Special Rapporteur met with various ministers and officials, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and other MPs.[98] In Rangoon, he met activists and civil society organizations, and two political prisoners in Insein Prison.[99]

Members of the Buddhist Rakhine community harassed Ojea Quintana during his visit. On 14 February, Rakhine residents in Akyab, Arakan State, demonstrated against his visit.[100] Protesters accused the Special Rapporteur of bias in favor of Rohingya in his reports and demanded his departure.[101]

On 19 February, Ojea Quintana issued a statement at Rangoon International Airport before departing the country at the end of his visit.[102] The statement said that there were a number of challenges, such as the situation in Arakan State, which if left unaddressed could jeopardize Burma's entire reform process.[103] He highlighted the following issues of concern:

- The military continued to have a "prevailing role" in state institutions.
- The judiciary lacked independence.
- The investigation into the Du Chee Yar Tan violence in Arakan State failed to comply with international standards as it was neither credible nor independent.
- The regime had not yet secured ceasefire and political agreements with all ethnic armed groups.
- The demands of ethnic groups had not yet been addressed in regards to the constitution.
- The Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law, Association Law, and Printing and Publishing Law were not in line with international human rights standards.
- The regime had not addressed the issues of seized land, forced relocation, loss of livelihood, and health problems caused by the Monywa copper mine.

DISPLACEMENT

Rohingya trafficked by Thailand, pushed back by Bangladesh

On 13 February, Thai police said 1,300 Rohingya had been deported to Burma between September and November 2013.[104] On 14 February, it was reported that a Thai policeman admitted that, in accordance

[94] DVB (11 Feb 14) Latpadaung activist Thaw Zin detained
[95] DVB (17 Feb 14) Protesters arrested after appealing for Latpadaung activist's release
[96] NLM (14 Feb 14) Special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar arrives in Yangon; Xinhua (20 Feb 14) Myanmar brings improvement to human rights situation: UN envoy
[97] UN OHCHR (19 Feb 14) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar
[98] UN OHCHR (19 Feb 14) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar
[99] UN OHCHR (19 Feb 14) Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar
[100] DVB (14 Feb 14) Protestors greet UN's Quintana in Sittwe; RFA (16 Feb 14) UN Envoy Holds Talks With Kachin Government, Rebel Leaders Amid Clashes; Narinjara (14 Feb 14) UN representative faces public furies in Sittwe
[101] DVB (14 Feb 14) Protestors greet UN's Quintana in Sittwe; RFA (16 Feb 14) UN Envoy Holds Talks With Kachin Government, Rebel Leaders Amid Clashes
[102] Xinhua (20 Feb 14) Myanmar brings improvement to human rights situation: UN envoy
[103] UNIC Yangon (19 Feb 14) Myanmar: UN rights expert hails changes, but highlights remaining challenges
[104] AFP (14 Feb 14) Thailand deports 1300 Rohingya; AP (13 Feb 14) Thai officials say Rohingya people sent to Myanmar

with a secret policy implemented by Thailand since October 2013, instead of deporting Rohingya, police had handed over many of them to traffickers to transport to Malaysia.[105]

Meanwhile, Bangladesh ignored US calls to provide Rohingya sanctuary and continued to push them back to Burma.[106]

- **8-9 February**: Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) arrested 40 Rohingya in Teknaf, Bangladesh, and pushed them back to Burma.[107]
- **11 February**: Bangladesh Coast Guard personnel intercepted two trawlers near St. Martin's Island, Bangladesh, and arrested 200 people, including some Rohingya, who were being trafficked to Malaysia.[108]

ECONOMY

Regime finalizes appointment of EITI multi-stakeholder group

On 8 February, the regime, in cooperation with civil society and private sector representatives, completed the appointment of Burma's 23-member Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) multi-stakeholder group.[109]

Eight members were appointed from the regime, including the Chairman, Finance Deputy Minister Maung Maung Thein, and Vice-Chairman, Electric Power Minister Deputy Myint Zaw.[110] Six group members were elected from the business sector, including representatives from Malaysia's state-owned Petronas, France's Total, the regime-controlled Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) and Burma's MPRL E&P.[111] Nine members were elected from civil society groups.[112]

The group will be responsible for ensuring the transparency of private and government revenues derived from the extractive industry according to EITI international standards, but will not address social and environmental rights violations caused by the industry.[113]

OTHER BURMA NEWS IN FEBRUARY

1	In Naypyidaw, National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann calls for an amendment to the "one-sided constitution" saying that some of its provisions are "inappropriate to the current reality."
2	About 3,000 local Rakhine hold a protest against Rohingya in Akyab [Sittwe], Arakan State, to call for additional police, stricter enforcement of the 1982 Citizenship Law, and the removal of UN and INGO representatives.
2	Five hundred residents of Kangon Village, Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, march to the UMEH-owned Mogyo sulphuric acid plant to demand it suspend operations as approximately 200 residents fell ill because of fumes from the plant.
2	NLD member Zaw Myint Oo says the Parliamentary constitutional review committee provided no reasons, only signatures, as to why Article 59(f), which bars Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from becoming president, should remain in the constitution.
3	Local press bodies Myanmar Journalists Association, Myanmar Press Union, Myanmar Journalists Network, and PEN Myanmar release a joint statement condemning the arrests of four journalists and a CEO from Unity Weekly journal under the 1923 Official Secrets Act.

[105] Reuters (14 Feb 14) Thai Police Target Traffickers But Rescued Rohingya May Face More Abuse; Reuters (04 Dec 13) SPECIAL REPORT-Thailand secretly dumps Myanmar refugees into trafficking rings
[106] Kaladan News (11 Feb 14) Bangladesh continues push back Rohingya to Burma
[107] Kaladan News (11 Feb 14) Bangladesh continues push back Rohingya to Burma
[108] Kaladan News (11 Feb 14) Bangladesh Coast Guard rescues 200 boat-people
[109] Myanmar Times (17 Feb 14) EITI to report on industry red flags; Myanmar Freedom (03 Feb 14) EITI coalition selects nine initial representatives; Myanmar Times (11 Feb 14) EITI Multi Stakeholders group to form mid-February
[110] Myanmar Times (17 Feb 14) EITI to report on industry red flags
[111] Myanmar Times (17 Feb 14) EITI to report on industry red flags
[112] Myanmar Times (17 Feb 14) EITI to report on industry red flags; The civil society groups represented in the EITI multi-stakeholder group are 88 Generation Students, EcoDev, Myanmar Green Network, Karen Environmental, Social Action Network, Sein Yaung So, Spectrum, Dawei Development Association, Paung Ku, Shwe Gas Movement.
[113] Myanmar Times (17 Feb 14) EITI to report on industry red flags; Myanmar Freedom (03 Feb 14) EITI coalition selects nine initial representatives; DVB (04 Feb 14) EITI: Getting Burma rigged for extractive surge

4	NLD Launglon Township MP Aung Soe calls on the regime to take immediate action against regime Livestock, Fisheries, and Rural Development Minister Ohn Myint because of offensive comments made to villagers in Magwe Township, Magwe Division on 28 January, where he threatened to slap the faces of local farmers who had asked for more wells.
5	President Thein Sein and regime officials meet with a Human Rights Watch delegation in Naypyidaw.
6	More than 150 activists from the People's Service Network and the Democracy Forces Group hold a march demanding changes to Articles 59(d) and 59(f) of the constitution in Rangoon's Ahlone Township.
6	Following their reports on the killing of over 40 Muslim Rohingya in Du Chee Yar Tan Village, Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, more than 1,000 Rakhine protestors in Buthidaung, Arakan State, demand that the UN, along with MSF, and other international relief agencies, withdraw their operations from the region.
6	Police attempt to rape a woman in Pa Din Village, Maungdaw Township, Arakan State.
6	US's ExIm Bank announces that it will begin providing credit and capital guarantees for short and medium-term contracts for US exports to Burma.
6	Human Rights Watch executive director Kenneth Roth says that "people continue to be arrested and charged on political grounds" in Burma because legislative reform is incomplete.
7	Assistance Association for Political Prisoners says there are still at least 33 political prisoners incarcerated in Burma and that at least 10 people have been arrested for political reasons since the beginning of 2014.
9	Hundreds of protesters gather at an NLD-organized rally in Chan Mya Thazi Township, Mandalay Division to demand the repeal of Article 59(f) of the constitution.
10	NLD and 88 Generation Students group release a joint statement vowing to work together toward constitutional reform before the 2015 elections in a bid to achieve "genuine democracy" and the formation of a federal union.
10	Regime Immigration and Population Minister Khin Yi says the census will utilize an official, long-accepted list of ethnicities which does not include disputed ethnic groups.
10	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar reports that 369 farmers to date have received a total of 703 million kyat (US$713,000) in compensation for 1079.35 acres of confiscated farmland.
11	UNOCHA's Public Information and Advocacy Officer Pierre Péron says that the anti-aid worker sentiment has "created a difficult operating environment" which is "affecting the ability of international actors to provide assistance" to IDPs.
11	Rights group ND-Burma releases "Report on the Human Rights Situation in Burma," which documents 106 incidences of human rights violations committed by the military – including torture, rape, and land confiscation – across Burma between July and December 2013.
11	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) concludes its four-day meeting in Rangoon with an agreement to submit recommendations for AICHR reform to ASEAN FMs.
12	ICG publishes a conflict alert, calling on the regime to remove "needlessly antagonistic and divisive" questions about religion, citizenship, and ethnicity from the census.
12	President Thein Sein calls on all ethnic groups "to establish the national unity based on the Panglong Spirit and to move towards a "peaceful, modern and developed democratic nation through a federal system" in his message to mark the 67th Union Day message.
13	UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana meets with the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society representatives in Rangoon to discuss the political and human rights situation.
13	Thai police Lt Gen Pharnu Kerdlarpphon says Thailand deported 1,300 Rohingya to Burma, in groups of 100 to 200 at a time, between September and November 2013.
14	Japan announces it will provide US$22 million to finance ADB projects aimed at reducing rural poverty and improving HIV/AIDS care throughout Burma.
14	Regime microfinance supervisory committee puts a US$500 cap on microfinance loans to ensure microfinance loans reach poor, rather than established businesses.
14	Police break up a protest of about 100 local residents from Aungon Village, Thegon Township, Pegu Division, who demanded the return of over 1,100 acres of farmland confiscated by the Tatmadaw in 2000.
14	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar announces the appointment of Khin Sann Yi as regime Education Minister.
14	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar announces the reshuffle of San Lwin from regime Education Deputy Minister to regime National Planning and Economic Development Deputy Minister.
16	About 300 pro-democracy activists in Rangoon's Thanlyin Township protest in support of amendments to the 2008 constitution to include Articles 59(d) and 59(f) regarding presidential qualifications.
16	UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana arrives in Myitkyina, Kachin State.
16	UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana meets separately with regime authorities in Myitkyina, Kachin State and with KIO leaders in Laiza, Momauk Township, Kachin State.
18	National Parliament Speaker Shwe Mann says the new Parliamentary committee for implementing

	constitutional amendments should submit their report on the implementation of amendments to Parliament at least six months before the November 2015 general elections.
18	IFC says it has given a US$5 million trade financing facility to Myanmar Oriental Bank to help insure Burma's exporters against payment risks and provide trade financing to local SMEs.
18	Regime National Planning and Economic Development Ministry official asks to renegotiate the ASEAN economic community's free trade regulations at the ASEAN economic integration task-force meeting.
18	Vice-President Mauk Kham meets North Korean ambassador to Burma Kim Sok Chol in Naypyidaw to discuss strengthening bilateral relations.
18	President Thein Sein's spokesman Ye Htut issues a warning saying that action would be taken against people who disrupt public talks on literature that are being held with legal permission.
19	Thai police rescue three migrant workers from Moulmein, Mon State, who were forced to work for three months without pay in slave-like conditions at a restaurant in Bangkok.
20	Regime National Planning and Economic Development Deputy Minister Lei Lei Thein and Japanese Ambassador to Burma Mikio Numata sign two Japanese aid agreements worth a total of 1.72 billion yen (US$16.74 million) for improving medical equipment at hospitals in Rangoon and for the development of roads and bridges in Arakan State.
21	Authorities release Eleven Media Group reporter Ma Khine from Loikaw Prison, Karenni State, after serving a three-month sentence on charges of trespassing, using abusive language, and defamation.
25	National Parliament appoints a 15-member commission chaired by Maj Gen Mya Win to oversee the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Law approved in July 2013.
25	Fortify Rights releases a report titled "Policies of Persecution: Ending Abusive State Policies Against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar," which implicates authorities in crimes against humanity by using discriminatory policies to restrict Rohingya's rights, including marriage, childbirth, and movement.
25	US State Department says there is no discussion in the US government to lift arms sanctions on Burma.
27	In its annual global report on human rights, the US State Department says that in 2013, the human rights crisis in Arakan State remained "the most troubling [...] threat to the country's progress" and that significant human rights problems, including conflict-related abuses, continued in ethnic minority border states.

REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN FEBRUARY

"**Report on the Human Rights Situation in Burma (July-December 2013)**", Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma (ND-Burma) http://bit.ly/1luk1sb

"**The Human Rights of Stateless Rohingya in Thailand**", Equal Rights Trust (ERT) http://bit.ly/LNGZ0h

"**World Press Freedom Index 2014**", Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) http://bit.ly/1lO880r

"**Monthly Chronology of Burma's Political Prisoners for January 2014**", Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) http://bit.ly/1kPMuea

"**Policies of Persecution: Ending Abusive State Policies Against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar**", Fortify Rights http://bit.ly/1gyOPVe

"**Attacks on the Press - Burma**", Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) http://bit.ly/1dCI56E

"**Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 - Burma**", US State Department http://1.usa.gov/1fv2Reb

"**Ethnicity without Meaning, Data without Context: The 2014 Census, Identity and Citizenship in Burma/Myanmar**", Transnational Institute (TNI) http://bit.ly/1cfhFgA

"**Large-scale land confiscation for Salween dam infrastructure in northern Shan State**", Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) http://bit.ly/1hzhwED