

Editorial Notes:

15 villages directly affected by the Burma Army's advances: Htee Hsee Kee, Htee Bway Kee, Taw Koh Mu Der, Ter May Kee, Thay Thoo Kee, Kyaw Aye Kee, Ghee Thoo Kee, Htee Kheh Kee, Blaw Koh, Hee Gho Lo Der, Haw Ther Kee, Saw Mu Plaw, Ler Mu Plaw, Baw Nah Der, and Cho Ber Koh

Since the bilateral ceasefire was signed between the Karen National Union and Burma Army in 2012, KNU authorities have requested withdrawal of 17 Burma Army camps in Mutraw District to facilitate return of displaced villagers to their ancestral lands. Instead, between 2012 and 2015, the military established 16 new bases in Mutraw, bringing the total from 65 to 81, while reinforcing existing installations.

The military's actions have long term consequences for food security and prospects for refugee/IDP return. For example, the fertile plains of Ler Mu Plaw alone comprise over 900 acres of irrigated land capable of feeding over 4,000 people; if the new military road is built, much of this plain might once again be abandoned by villagers who are too afraid to live near soldiers who have attacked and abused them for decades.

The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), which was signed by the KNU in 2015, requires that both parties honor existing territories while peace negotiations continue, and it forbids acts of aggression, expansion of military infrastructure, and troop reinforcements in ceasefire areas.

The Salween Peace Park is a community-based initiative that aims to make a concrete contribution to the peace process in Mutraw District. The initiative reflects the core aspirations of the Karen people: 1) peace and self-determination; 2) environmental integrity, and 3) cultural survival. To learn more about the Salween Peace Park, please see the informational brochure at the following link: <http://kesan.asia/index.php/resources/download/2-briefer-and-flyer/98-salween-peace-park-a-vision-for-an-indigenous-karen-landscape-of-human-nature-harmony-in-southeast-myanmar>