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BURMA 2000 Karen villagers forced to flee Burma Army attacks

More than 2000 Karen villagers have been forced to flee their homes in the past week following attacks by the Burma Army, according to the Free Burma Rangers (FBR), a relief organization working in the conflict zones of eastern Burma.

At least four villagers have been shot and one body has been found decapitated.

FBR reports say these recent attacks began when two villagers were shot in Keh Der village on 17 January in Ler Doh Township. Ten houses were burned down causing many villagers to flee for their lives.

On 18 January, more villagers were shot at by Burma Army troops in Hti Aw Top, Mon Township. Two women and one man on their way to sell goods were taken captive by patrolling troops and tied up. The following day, Burma Army soldiers from Naw Soe camp shot at three villagers from Kaw Htoo Toe while they were harvesting bamboo. One tried to help his badly wounded co-worker, but was chased and shot at again. A decapitated body has since been found by relief workers.

Mervyn Thomas, CSW's Chief Executive, said: "These latest attacks are yet another example of the military regime's war crimes and crimes against humanity. With the regime's sham elections planned in Burma this year, it is now more vital than ever to highlight the plight of the Burmese people, especially the oppressed ethnic nationalities. It is now high time for the international community to impose an immediate universal arms embargo, and the UN to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate Burma's crimes against humanity, without further delay".