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## BURMA European Burma Network calls for end to attacks on civilians in Shan State

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The European Burma Network (EBN) has released a statement on the humanitarian crisis in Burma's Shan State, calling for an end to military attacks on civilians, an increase in humanitarian aid and a concerted push for a tripartite dialogue between the ruling regime, the mainstream democracy movement and ethnic groups.

Twenty members of EBN have signed the statement, which details the human rights abuses committed on the civilians of Shan State by the Burma Army since the dictatorship broke a 22-year ceasefire agreement with the Shan State Army–North on 13 March 2011. Around 3,500 Burmese Army soldiers took part in a military offensive in north-central Shan State, an area with a population of 100,000. Sixty-five clashes were reported in the first three weeks of the breaking the ceasefire.

According to the statement, “Civilians are being targeted in the military offensive, with mortar bombs fired at civilian villages. Abuses committed by the Burmese Army include arbitrary execution, arbitrary detention, torture, looting, rape, forced relocation and forced labor. These abuses are violations of international law. Since breaking the ceasefire, abuses continue on a daily basis.”

“The breaking of the ceasefire with Shan State Army–North on 13th March is the third time in the past two years the dictatorship has broken a ceasefire agreement. It is also threatening to break all other ceasefire agreements. This would lead to large scale conflict from Mon State, Karen State, and Karenni State, to Shan State and Kachin State. The result would be a major humanitarian crisis and a massive escalation in human rights abuses against civilians, as the Burmese Army targets civilians in conflict.”

The statement continues, “The international community has repeatedly stated that the solution to the problems in Burma lie in tripartite dialogue between the dictatorship, the mainstream democracy movement, and ethnic groups. However, no serious effort has ever been made to secure such dialogue. Efforts to secure such dialogue should be a top priority for the international community, including the European Union, in its engagement with the dictatorship.”

CSW's East Asia Team Leader Benedict Rogers said, “As a member of EBN, we join with others across Europe in urging the European Union (EU) to provide desperately-needed humanitarian assistance for civilians affected by the conflict, and to put pressure on the regime to stop threatening and attacking civilians in ethnic states, and declare a nationwide ceasefire in Burma. It is significant that 20 organizations from countries throughout the EU are making this call for action in response to the crisis in Shan State and the impending emergency in other ethnic areas. We hope the EU, and European governments, will take notice and respond with the action required.”

### **Notes to Editors:**

1. To read a copy of the statement, please [click here](#).