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BURMA Army attacks church in Kachin State, shooting and torturing worshippers

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has today received a report from sources inside Kachin State, Burma alleging that soldiers from the Burma Army shot at worshippers in a church in Wai Maw Township two days ago.

Soldiers from the Burma Army's 88th Light Infantry Division attacked the Assemblies of God church in Muk Chyik village, Wai Maw Township on November 6, injuring several people. The congregation was expelled from the church, and soldiers reportedly looted church donation boxes. The house of one church member, Mr. Jumhpawk Hawng Lum, was burned down. At least fifty church members are taken to work as forced porters for the Burma Army.

The pastor of the church, the Reverend Yajawng Hkawng, was severely tortured and is now in hospital. One of the church deacons, Hpalawng Lum Hkawng, who is the youth music team leader, was injured in his leg. CSW's East Asia Team Leader Benedict Rogers said, "The military in Burma has unleashed yet another wave of terror against civilians in the ethnic states, at a time when the regime is speaking about reform. The regime is perpetrating war crimes and crimes against humanity. These attacks in Kachin State, involving rape, forced labour, torture, the killings of civilians, and religious persecution are grave violations of international law and must be stopped. Attacking churches where civilians are gathering to pray peacefully is a serious violation of religious freedom. The international community must take immediate action to provide humanitarian assistance to those internally displaced in Kachin State, and to end the culture of impunity which has prevailed in Burma for too long."