CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY WORLDWIDE USA
VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

3.30.2012

BURMA | Army burns villagers' homes to the ground

Burma Army soldiers burnt down the homes of six villagers in Nam San Yang Township in Burma's Kachin State, near the China-Burma border, on March 25, 2012.

The soldiers belong to the Tatmadaw 388 Light Infantry Division, which has been terrorizing civilians in Kachin State. There have been ongoing clashes between the Burma Army and the Kachin Independence Army, which is fighting to secure greater autonomy for the region. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced by the violence.

A fact-finding team from Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) visited Rangoon and Kachin State in February, and recorded first-hand testimonies of the killing, rape and torture of civilians, and the destruction of homes, churches and villages.

Benedict Rogers, East Asia Team Leader at CSW, said, "This incident is yet another illustration of the very mixed picture of Burma today. On Sunday, Burma will hold by-elections in 45 parliamentary seats, and Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy (NLD) will contest them. That may be a sign of some political change - the first time in 22 years that the NLD has been able to contest parliamentary seats. However, in Kachin State the Burma Army continues to attack civilians and perpetrate severe violations of human rights. If the Government of Burma is sincere in its intention to reform, these attacks must stop and a genuine peace process involving political dialogue must be established with all the ethnic nationalities. This case shows that there is still a long way to go towards true freedom and peace in Burma, and the international community must maintain pressure for change."