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## BURMA Reports of gang rape in church near Kachin-China border

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Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has received reports of the gang rape and prolonged torture of a woman in a church near the Kachin-China border in early May.

The Kachin Women's Association (KWA) reports that on May 1 a grandmother of 12 was sheltering alone in a church after other villagers had fled the village. Burma Army troops entered the church where they beat her with rifle butts, stabbed her with knives, stripped her naked and gang-raped her over a period of three days. On May 4, following her ordeal, she was taken to hospital by villagers and reunited with her children however she is now suffering from mental health problems.

A CSW team visited Kachin State in January 2012 and received other reports of the rape of women by Burmese troops. In one case, documented in [CSW's visit report](#), a woman called Sumlut Roi Ji was raped repeatedly over a number of days before she disappeared. Her husband took this case to the Supreme Court in Naypyidaw; however CSW has now learned that the court dismissed all charges against the Burmese military. Responding to this judgment, a spokesperson from KWA said, "The message from the Naypyidaw Supreme Court is clear: the Burmese military can rape and kill ethnic women with impunity."

CSW's East Asia Team Leader Benedict Rogers said, "This is an appalling case and it shows that despite all the signs of change in other parts of the country, crimes against humanity continue to be perpetrated by the Burma Army against ethnic nationalities, particularly the Kachin. If President Thein Sein's reform process is to really mean true change for Burma, the military must stop raping, torturing, enslaving and killing civilians. The international community is right to welcome the progress made in Burma so far, but it must be careful it is not blinded by optimism. As long as women are being raped and tortured and killed, and churches are occupied by the military and such crimes committed in them, we must maintain pressure on President Thein Sein to stop these attacks and make serious progress towards a meaningful peace process with the ethnic nationalities."

### Notes to Editors:

1. CSW's visit report to Burma can be downloaded [here](#)
2. Benedict Rogers is the author of a forthcoming book, *Burma: A Nation at the Crossroads*, to be published by Random House in July.