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BURMA | Kachin Civilians Killed Despite Agreement to End Hostilities

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has learned that a Kachin civilian, Zahkung Lum Hkawng, was tortured, beaten, and shot dead by the Burmese Army in Northern Shan State on June 14. The killing occurred just weeks after the Burmese government and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) signed a seven-point agreement in Myitkyina on May 30.

On the night of June 14, Zahkung Lum Hkawng, 45, was taking his turn as a security guard for his village, Nawng Hen, when Burmese troops entered the village and demanded that the village head provide a guide for them. Lum Hkawng was forced to accompany the troops to Mung Ya Hka Zup village where they clashed with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the armed wing of the KIO. The Burmese Army troops accused Lum Hkawng of deliberately leading them into an ambush. They beat and tortured the victim and before shooting him.

On the same day, an unnamed villager was killed by the Burmese Army at the road between Nan Gat and Ying La villages. A group of villagers from Nawng Hen who went to retrieve the victim's body were stopped by Burmese Army troops at Nan Gat village and told they were not allowed to go any further. The same afternoon another round of fighting took place between Burmese troops and the KIA, giving the neighbors the opportunity to take the victim's body back to his remaining family members, including his elderly mother, wife, and six children.

The Burmese Army and KIO are engaged in ongoing talks to resolve the two-year conflict. On May 30 the two sides reached a seven-point deal in which they agreed to "undertake efforts to achieve de-escalation and cessation of hostilities." There is an urgent need to end the conflict, which has resulted in the displacement of at least 100,000 civilians as well as numerous human rights violations.

In a four-week fact-finding visit to Burma earlier this year, CSW reported testimonies of internally displaced Kachin people who had experienced horrific physical, psychological and sexual torture. [CSW's report](#) welcomed signs of political change in the country but highlighted

“many very grave challenges and concerns, particularly in respect to the protection of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief.”

Despite the May 30 agreement, villagers in this area report the daily reinforcement of Burmese troops, prompting fears that incidents like those mentioned above could multiply.

CSW’s Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, “We condemn the killing of these two civilians by Burmese troops. We call on the Burmese Army’s to take seriously its commitment to the de-escalation of the conflict and encourage all parties involved in the conflict to work towards the cessation of hostilities and a lasting peace agreement.”