



**Chin Association
of Maryland, Inc.**

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Statement by Reverend Ah Le
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U.S. Institute of Peace



Airstrike on A Nang Pa Concert in Kachin State



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- At a concert celebrating the 62nd anniversary of the Kachin Independence Organization on October 23, 2022, Tatmadaw airstrikes killed approximately 80 attendees, including musicians and civilians.
- Over 100 more were injured, and emergency workers reported that some victims died because Tatmadaw troops prevented their transport to a hospital in the nearby town of Hpakant . Sources familiar with the situation informed CAM that two pastors were among the dead.
- We welcome the U.S. Treasury's Burma Jet Fuel Sanctions Alert from March 24, 2023, which names this attack.

Arrest and Detention of Reverend Dr. Hkalam Samson



- Dr. Samson is an advisor and former General Secretary and President of the Kachin Baptist Convention
- On December 5, 2022, the SAC arrested Rev. Dr. Samson at Mandalay International Airport on his way to Bangkok for medical treatment and interrogated him overnight at the Central Regional Military Headquarters
- The arrest ignored legal procedures: there was no warrant, no given explanation, and no processing at a police station before transfer to the interrogation center

Arrest and Detention of Reverend Dr. Hkalam Samson



- Dr. Samson is being held at Myitkyina Prison, Kachin State and appeared before a secret court on January 11 and 13 on charges of criminal defamation, incitement, and unlawful association with an illegal group.
- In a third hearing on February 14, a terrorism charge was added. Dr. Samson's wife reported that he was denied family visits and deliveries of food and medicine during his detention.

Arrest and Detention of Reverend Dr. Hkalam Samson



- Myitkyina Prison Court's Final Decision: Dr. Samson's lawyer reports that on April 7, 2023, the Reverend was sentenced to a total of six years in prison.
- Two years under Section 17(1) of the Unlawful Association Act
- One year under Section 505(A) of the Penal Code for incitement
- Three years under Section 52(A) of the Terrorism Act

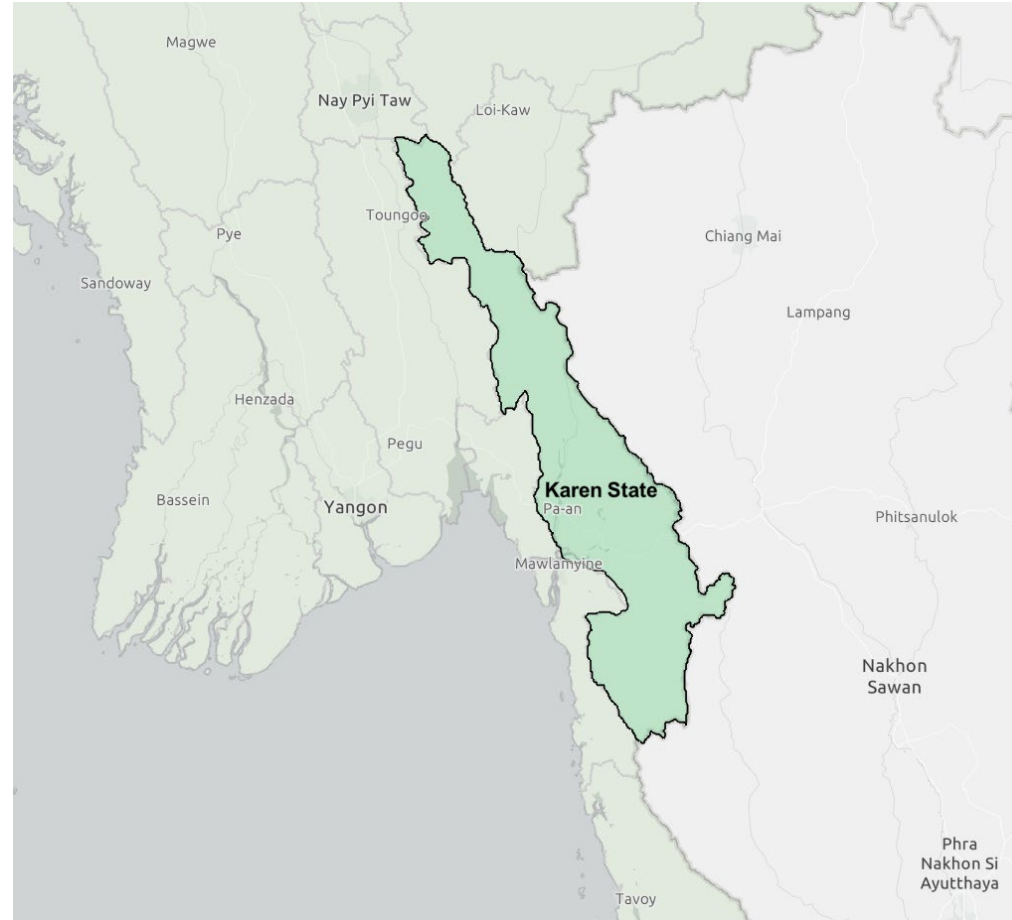
23-Year Sentence for Rev. Thian Lian Sang

- Reverend Sang was the Chin pastor of Falam Baptist Church in Mandalay. On September 16, 2021, the Tatmadaw arrested him and confiscated 400,000 kyats (\$215 USD) from his home as well as his family's cellphones.
- On December 7, 2022, Reverend Sang was sentenced to twenty-three years in prison on charges of rebellion against the government and providing weapons to rebels. He remains at Obo Prison, Mandalay Region, where he has been held since his arrest.



Karen State

- On January 12, 2023, two junta warplanes bombed Lay Wah Village in Mutraw, Karen State. The attack killed five people, including two Christian leaders and a child.
- The two religious leaders, identified as Catholic catechist Saw Re Di and Baptist pastor Saw Cha Aye, were killed when bombs destroyed their respective churches.



Karenni State



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- On December 24, 2022, Tatmadaw soldiers forced thirty-five people out of their vehicles on Christmas Eve day, killed them, and burned them and their vehicles along a highway near Moso Village in Hpruso Township.
- The UK-based nongovernmental organization Save the Children reported two of its staff were among the dead, along with a number of women and children.



Recommendations for Accountability

I echo Zo Tum Hmung's statement: the military junta is acting with a clear pattern of religious persecution in Burma today.

We welcomed the U.S. determination of the atrocities against the Rohingya people as genocide and crimes against humanity. What happened to the Rohingya is now happening in other states and regions, including Kachin State. Dr. Samson's six-year prison sentence is only one of the latest examples.

Now it is time for the Biden administration to make a designation of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the case of Christian minority persecution, as the SAC has burned churches, killed and imprisoned pastors, and displaced thousands of civilians.

These crimes are occurring with impunity. We need the United States to ensure accountability for the SAC.

Recommendations for Humanitarian Assistance

The United States should do more to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to both IDPS in Burma as well as refugees fleeing the conflict.

