



## **New report details Naypyidaw’s “Blood Amber” clearance operation against indigenous people in Hugawng Valley**

Date: August 20, 2019

A new report launched today details how Burma’s security forces have driven out thousands of indigenous farmers from the Hugawng Valley amber mining region in Kachin State, to seize control of this lucrative resource and further secure the Ledo road corridor linking China and India -- part of the Belt and Road initiative.

“Blood Amber,” by the Kachin Development Networking Group (KDNG), maps out the systematic takeover by Burmese government forces of this mining area from the Kachin Independence Army and the clearance of its indigenous inhabitants.

The official premise of the Hugawng campaign was to “clear illegal mining” and “protect the environment,” but the government’s subsequent steps to legalize and then restart amber mining against the wishes of the original inhabitants, makes clear their real intentions.

Even though the government gained full control of the amber mine region in 2018, over 3,000 local Kachin farmers remain stranded in IDP camps in Tanai town, blocked from returning home by government forces and deprived of official aid.

The displaced villagers have appealed in an open letter to the President of Myanmar to stop the amber mining, spare their villages and farmlands, and grant them the right to return home, but to no avail.

“Because the amber is being looted, we indigenous people have been displaced and are suffering,” said one farmer. “I am very sad for our children’s future. I don’t know how long we will have to live like this.”

The Hugawng offensive follows a repeated pattern of military expansion and violence against ethnic peoples in Kachin State to consolidate extractive businesses for the benefit of the military and central government.

“It is well known how our mountains, rivers and farmlands have been destroyed by jade mining in the once beautiful region of Hpakant,” says Tsa Ji, General Secretary of KDNG. “Now the central government wants to do the same to the amber regions of Hugawng.”

Kachin State amber is the only amber in the world formed during the age of the dinosaurs. It is around 100 million years old, while amber from other regions of the world ranges in age from three to 40 million years old. Scientists have discovered extinct species of birds, reptiles, insects, and even parts of dinosaurs preserved in Hugawng Valley amber.

“Blood Amber” is the Chinese name of the extremely rare, deep red variety of the gem found only in the Hugawng Valley

See details report: <https://kdng.org/2019/08/19/blood-amber/>

Contact:

Seng Awng (local)	+95 9265755762
Lu Seng (local)	+95 9763093403
Tsa Ji (KDNG)	+95 9401538249
Zau Mai (KDNG)	+95 9424341994