



# Chin Human Rights Organization

Working for the Rights of the Chin People & Other Marginalized Communities Since 1995

A Non-Governmental Organization in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations Since 2018

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## **Two Civilians Tortured to Death, Bodies “Cremated” to Destroy Evidence**

The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) is deeply troubled and strongly condemns the torture and death of two Chin civilians by Tatmadaw soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 266 operating under the Tactical Operations Command based in Hakha, Chin State. CHRO is calling for a thorough and independent investigation into the deaths of the two individuals while in custody, as well as all allegations of systematic torture practices currently being used against civilian detainees at the LIB 266 military base detention centre located on Mount Rung.

Tler Ling, a 54-year-old local farmer was arrested by Tatmadaw soldiers on Sunday, 9 May having been accused of harboring members of the Chinland Defense Force (CDF) and for alleged possession of a traditional hunting rifle at his farmhouse on the outskirts of Hakha Town. A second victim, 27-year-old, Kham Bawi who had just arrived from his village and was staying with relatives in Hakha, was arrested separately on the same day. Both were taken to the Tactical Operations Command Center on Mount Rung where, it is alleged, were tortured to death.

Initially the Tactical Operations Commander, Colonel Saw Tun told community and religious leaders that the two had succumbed to injuries sustained during their interrogations while on the way to Kalay Myo (approx. 200 kilometres away from Hakha) having been transported there for urgent medical treatment. This differed from accounts provided within the Monday edition of the state-run daily newspaper *Myanmar Alin*, which stated that the two had succumbed to heart disease. When community leaders pressed for the bodies to be returned to the families for proper burial according to Chin customary traditions, Colonel Saw Tun informed community members that the bodies had been cremated as 54-year-old, Tler Ling was discovered to have contracted COVID-19.

CHRO has raised grave concerns regarding the treatment of detainees and allegations of torture practices used by the Tatmadaw during interrogations and has documented serious bodily and psychological injuries inflicted on civilian detainees suspected of being involved in anti-junta activities since the February 1 coup d'état:

“Accountability for such heinous crimes must go to the top of the chain of command. As the two highest-ranking army officials in Chin State, we hold Tactical Operations Commander Colonel Saw Tun, and Brigadier-General Myo Htut Hlaing, Deputy Commander of the Northwestern Regional Command as culpable for the deaths of Tler Ling and Khamh Bawi,” said Salai Za Uk Ling, Deputy Executive Director of CHRO.

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