

Press release by Action for Shan State Rivers

March 15, 2024

Villagers in three townships gather to oppose dam building on Shan State rivers

Local villagers and youth in Hsipaw and Kyaukme, northern Shan State, and in Kunhing, southern Shan State, gathered at river banks to hold blessing ceremonies and call for a halt to dam building on the occasion of the International Day of Action for Rivers.

On March 14, about 200 villagers from Namma village tract in Hsipaw township gathered at the Namma riverbank holding banners with slogans such as “May our river flow freely forever”, “May Shan State Rivers flow freely” and “May Shan State people be free” in Shan and Burmese languages. Villagers also carried out a traditional blessing ceremony and released a raft to symbolize their resistance to damming the Namma, a sub-tributary of the Namtu/Myitnge river.



Local people gathering at Namma meeting hall



Local people at Namma river bank



Releasing a raft for the Namma river to flow freely forever

In Kyaukme township, about 30 young people gathered at the Namtu river bank, holding up a signboard calling for a stop to dam building on all Shan State rivers including the Namtu.

The Namtu is one the main rivers in northern Shan State, relied on by local farmers for transportation and agriculture. Several of its tributaries have become silted up and shallow due to extensive coal mining.

Despite intensification of conflict between resistance forces and the SAC military regime in townships along the Namtu in recent months, construction of two large hydropower dams on the river have been continuing: the Upper Yeywa dam at Taung Che village, Kyaukme township, and the Namtu dam at Tadae village in Hsipaw township.

In Kunhing, about 100 local people also gathered on the bank of the Salween river to mark the International Day of Action for Rivers.

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