

## THE UWSA AND THE FUTURE:

### Major concerns for Shan State and the NLD-led Government

From 26-28 March 2016, the United Wa State Party/United Wa State Army (UWSP/UWSA) hosted an Ethnic Armed Organizations leaders' Summit at its headquarters in Panghsang, Wa Special Region. Present at the meeting were representatives from the Kachin Independence Organisation/Kachin Independence Army (KIO/KIA), Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA), Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (PSLF/TNLA), the Kachin based United League for Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA) and the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA).

While ostensibly organised by the UWSA to discuss the negotiating position of those groups present that did not sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement on 15 October, in reality, a major focus of attention was the continuing conflict between the TNLA and the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA), better known as the SSA-South. Conflict between the two groups erupted in Shan State on 27 November 2015 in Namhkam and Mantong townships, near the China border. Reports from the Ta'ang claim that members of the SSA-S had crossed into their areas, which they designate as Kyaukme, Namhsan, Mantong and Namkham townships, without seeking 'permission' a claim the RCSS has denied (See EBO Briefing Paper No.6 - A Disturbing Portent - Inter-ethnic tensions and the peace process).

While there is little doubt that a main area of discussion at the meeting was focussed on how to work with the new government, the summit also elevated the inclusion of the UWSA in the peace process. The UWSA had, over the years, attempted to move away from ethnic politics in relation to armed ethnic groups frequently claiming it already has an agreement it is happy with. After being told that if they did not sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) they would not be granted an autonomous state, a senior UWSA official apparently replied,

We have made a statement that we will not sign the NCA, because throughout the past 25 years there was no fighting between us . . . We have been staying in peace. There is no point in signing the NCA.<sup>1</sup>

However, over the last couple of years, with fissures in the ethnic alliance United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), political dialogue in January 2016, and the inauguration of the new government, it has recalibrated its position and appears now to be seeking a much greater role among those ethnic organisations that have yet to sign a ceasefire agreement.

### Background

The UWSA, under the command of Pao Yu Hsiang (Bao Youxiang), controls most of the Wa hills from its Headquarters at Panghsang, the former Communist Party of Burma H.Q., along the border with China and also maintains a southern command, the 171<sup>st</sup> Military Region, under the control of Wei Hsueh Kang (Wei Xuegang), which stretches from Mong Hsat to Mong Yawn on the Thai-Myanmar border.

The UWSA is the strongest ethnic army with an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 heavily armed soldiers including local militia units. Following a major reorganisation in late 2007, the UWSA was divided into 9 brigades, split between northern and southern regions, with Tatmadaw forces occupying territory between them. The 171<sup>st</sup> is currently divided into 5 brigades - the 772<sup>nd</sup> at Mong Jawd, the 775<sup>th</sup> at Hwe Aw, the 778<sup>th</sup> at Hsankarng, the 248<sup>th</sup> at Hopang-Hoyawd and the 518<sup>th</sup> at Mong Yawn. The Wa North comprises three brigades – the 318<sup>th</sup> at Namteuk, the 418<sup>th</sup> at Kiu-hey, the 618 Takawng-et

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Bridge, and the 468<sup>th</sup> at Mong Pawk. In addition, the northern Wa region also has an artillery regiment and a Headquarters security force.<sup>2</sup>

The UWSA was able to use money from its own lucrative narcotics trade to invest in a number of casinos, hotels, and other entertainment enterprises. It is also involved in general trading, production of textiles, wires and cables, electric appliances and agricultural goods, livestock breeding, gem mining and highway construction. According to author Bertil Lintner,

. . . in January 2000, the Hong Kong weekly *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that two hundred members of the UWSA had arrived at Tamu, opposite Moreh in Manipur, where they set up an unofficial “trade office.”<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the narcotics trade and its other commercial interests, reports suggest that the United Wa State Army has also widened its illegal commercial interests in arms. Most notably, the UWSA is thought to be a weapons source not only for armed ethnic groups in Myanmar but also for insurgent groups in north-eastern India,

In about 2005, the UWSA decided to establish its own production lines for assault rifles and light machine guns. The plant was able to manufacture replicas of the Chinese-designed M–22 assault rifle, and the Chinese M–23 light machine gun, as well as 7.62 mm ammunition that is used by both weapons. With technical assistance from Chinese weapons experts, the factory became operational in September 2006 and occupied a structure inside the UWSA chairman Bao Youxiang’s compound in Kunma, 125 kilometers north of the group’s main headquarters at Panghsang right on the Chinese border.<sup>4</sup>

But, according to Bertil Lintner,

. . . It became a major embarrassment for the Chinese authorities and in 2010 they ordered the UWSA to dismantle the Kunma factory. Nothing of it remains today, but Chinese-made guns continue to flow across Burma to northeastern India, or, at least until recently, were shipped to Bangladesh and then smuggled across the border into Assam, Nagaland, and Manipur.<sup>5</sup>

By 2003, the UWSA had also been officially accused of money laundering by the U.S. which designated them as significant narcotics traffickers under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act. In 2005, the DEA issued indictments for eight UWSA leaders. Those on the list were Wei Hsueh Kang, special advisor to UWSA’s Central Committee and previously commander of UWSA’s Military Region 171, Wei Hsueh Lung, UWSA Minister of Trade and Finance, Wei Hsueh Ying, deputy commander of military forces in the UWSA’s Southern Military Region and in charge of trade in the UWSA’s Military Region 171, Pao Yu Hsiang, Commander-in-Chief of the UWSA, Pao Yu Yi, Political Commissar of UWSA’s Southern Military Region, Pao Yu Hua (deceased), commander UWSA military forces in the Mong Hpen region and previously commander of a UWSA security detachment in Mong Mao area. Pao Yu Liang, governor and commander of UWSA forces in the Mong Mao area, and Pao Hua Chiang UWSA trade and finance officer.

It is estimated that the UWSA controls a full 34 % of Myanmar’s total heroin production and the UWSA oversees as much as 80 % of the trade in methamphetamine pills from the country.<sup>6</sup> The market for methamphetamine produced in areas controlled by the UWSA and other former CPB forces is in Thailand and increasingly also in Laos, Cambodia, north-eastern India, and Bangladesh.<sup>7</sup>

Most recently their involvement in the Jade and Tin industries has also come under scrutiny. The Global Witness report “Myanmar’s Big State Secret” highlights the UWSA’s involvement in the Jade trade, noting,

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UWSA/UWSP-related figures have been heavyweights in the jade business since the 1990s. The introduction of US sanctions forced a shuffling of the pack in the mid-2000s, but Global Witness investigations have identified five firms we believe are now the front for Wei Hsueh Kang's jade ventures. These companies recorded pre-tax sales of US\$100 million across the 2013 and 2014 government gems emporiums.

Meanwhile, their involvement in Tin extraction also adds heavily to the UWSA's coffers. According to one recent report, Myanmar has seen a 4900% increase over a 5-year period. And notes that,

Analysis has suggested that the bulk of this new production is not sourced from the traditional tin-production regions in southern Myanmar, but instead from an emerging mining area, the Man Maw mining district, situated in Wa State, an autonomous region in the northern Shan States.<sup>8</sup>

And that,

The UWSA effectively runs Wa as an independent state, with its own foreign policy, and with direct business dealings with China. As such, it is probable that most revenues from the tin mining activities go straight to the Wa government, largely by-passing the central Myanmar government.<sup>9</sup>

With ever-increasing revenue sources, not only based on narcotics, and with support from China which sees Wa Special Region-2 as a buffer between it and Myanmar, the UWSA, which had largely remained isolationist, has sought to further strengthen its position in the country. Both the Kachin Independence Organisation and the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) an alliance of non-signatory armed groups have sought to use their ties to the UWSA to bolster their individual objectives.

## The West – East Shift

Since the mid-seventies up until around 2011, most ethnic armed resistance to the central government was based on the eastern border with Thailand. Many of the armed ethnic groups on the border with China and in central Shan State had signed ceasefire agreements with the government. The MNDAA, UWSA, NDAA-ESS, and KIO had all agreed in the late eighties/early nineties to work with the government. The latter which had been closely allied with the Karen National Union and had an office at the KNU HQ at Manerplaw agreed to a ceasefire with the Government in 1994, much to the indignation of the KNU leadership.

While low-level contacts had been made between ethnic groups in the west, especially by the KNU, it wasn't until the signing of a number of individual ceasefire agreements by armed ethnic groups in 2011 and the breakdown of the ceasefire with the KIO that contact with the UWSA intensified. As noted earlier, the UWSA has largely refused to be embroiled in the armed resistance movements of other groups. That said however, it has maintained a veneer of ethnic solidarity.

In March 2009, the Myanmar Peace and Democracy Front (MPDF), was reportedly formed.<sup>10</sup> The four-group military alliance comprised the United Wa State Army (UWSA), the MNDAA, NDAA, and the KIO. During the attacks on the MNDAA in late August 2009, it was assumed that all members would rally around their beleaguered comrades. However, even though MNDAA leaders Peung Kya-shin had called for support from other groups, none was immediately forthcoming. It wasn't until the Myanmar Army advanced towards Qingsuihe (Chin Shwe Haw) that 400-500 UWSA troops reacted and purportedly fought alongside Kokang troops.

But, it must be noted, the reason for this is likely to have been to secure its own positions at Namteuk which was across the river from the MNDAA base. By 29 August 2009, four days after fighting began,

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the UWSA's troops had withdrawn across the river to protect their own border and the MNDAA base soon fell. With the exception of a few minor skirmishes Wa troops provided little to no support in defence of their Kokang allies.

There is some speculation as to whether the UWSA failed to act due to Chinese pressure or possible ties with pro-SPDC Kokang leaders. Despite the previous failure by the UWSA to support the MNDAA many non-signatories to the October 2015 ceasefire still see the UWSA as the way forward.

This is primarily due to the influence of the KIO which has largely led UNFC policy over the past three years. The UNFC was rocked in 2014 when the KNU delegation walked out of the alliance's first congress on 31 August. The KNU had submitted a 10-page proposal calling for a rotating leadership position instead of the UNFC's top-down administration led by the Kachin Independence Organisation. With little deliberation, the Congress led by the KIO's N'Ban La rejected the proposal.<sup>11</sup>

As a consequence, the KNU suspended its membership in the body causing a rift within the KNU leadership while the KIO, and tacitly the UNFC, sought to replace the KNU's bargaining strength with that of the UWSA.

## The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement

Even though the armed group's Nationwide Ceasefire Co-ordinating Team (NCCT) and the Thein Sein Government signed a draft Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) text on 31 March 2015, a number of issues remained.

While the signing was seen as a major accomplishment by both parties, the signing of the text was only the first step in seeing the NCA draft accepted by both parties. While the Government had all but signalled their acceptance of the document, the ethnic groups still required further deliberation on its contents and consequently called for a summit to discuss the matter. While such summits typically took place in KNU territory the KIO was able to use their influence and persuade the UWSA to hold it instead at their Panghsang HQ.

The Summit, which started on 1 May and ended on 6 May 2015 was attended by a total of 65 leaders and observers from 12 Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs). The attendees included the Arakan Army, Kachin Independence Organization, Karen National Union, Karenni National Progressive Party, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, National Democratic Alliance Army, New Mon State Party, Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization, Palaung State Liberation Front, Restoration Council of Shan State, Shan State Progress Party, and United Wa State Party.

Surprisingly, only 9 of the 16 NCCT members received invitations. The failure to include a number of groups, especially the Chin National Front, was at odds with the spirit of unity that had so often been promoted, while the inclusion of the Ta-ang, the Kokang, and the Arakan Army further irritated the Government.

Aung Myint, a UWSA spokesman reading from a statement on behalf of UWSA chairman Bao Youxiang noted that:

We invited to this meeting our brotherhood of ethnic armed groups who are in ongoing fighting [with the Burma Army]. We are like a jaw and its teeth, which cannot be divided,<sup>12</sup>

At the end of the summit, a position statement was issued. The points included were:

1. Resolution of the civil war through political means
2. Inclusion of EAOs yet to conclude ceasefire with the government in the signing of the NCA

3. Cessation of government offensives in Kachin, Palaung, Kokang and Arakan areas
4. Curbs on further human rights abuses
5. Amendment of 2008 constitution to build up a federal union based on democracy, national equality and right of self determination
6. There will be no secession from the union
7. Welcomes UN and China's efforts to bring about cessation of hostilities in northern Burma and the signing of the NCA
8. Nationwide political dialogue must include representatives from government, parliament, Tatmadaw (Burmese military), political parties, the people and the EAOs
9. Need to cultivate the spirit of peaceful co-existence among different nationalities
10. EAOs will form a representative body to hold talks with the government
11. The majority EAOs attending the summit have shown understanding and support for the Wa call for a state level status
12. More meetings hosted by the United Wa State Party will be held in order to further discuss and implement the points agreed at the summit

Point number 11 was particularly contentious as it would mean slicing off part of Shan State to create a Wa state, a move unlikely to be viewed favourably by the RCSS. (The SSPP, known as one of the UWSA's staunch allies, itself reportedly incurred Wa indignation by remaining silent about the matter).<sup>13</sup> But, with the support of the UNFC, the UWSA claim was further strengthened and the UNFC position with the RCSS further diminished. It was at this point that it became clear that there had been a pivot toward country-wide ethnic resistance. And it was now being led by the KIO and bolstered by the UWSA, both of which had objectives far removed from those of many of the other armed ethnic groups.

In a further attempt to control the process, another ethnic armed organisation leader's summit was held from 1 to 3 November 2015 not long after the 15 October signing of the NCA by eight armed ethnic organisations including the KNU and RCSS.

The groups participating in the Panghsang summit were the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), SSPP, New Mon State Party (NMSP), Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Arakan Army (AA), Karen National Defence Organization (KNDO), Kayan Newland Party (KNLP) and UWSA.

While there was a strange anomaly in the fact that Zipporah Sein and David Thackerbaw attended under the guise of the KNDO, the village defence force of the KNU with no political authority, those attending clearly showed the new paradigm shift.

Although it was not surprising that the KNPP had chosen to attend, considering their position next to Shan State, the fact that the NMSP had decided to allow the KIO and UWSA to decide their political destiny was somewhat anomalous.

As is often the case, a final statement was issued echoing pretty much all previous statements from such gatherings, although point 5 did attest to the guidance ethnic armed organisations are likely to get and from which country, in that the attendees

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Urge, in order to resolve the military conflict in northern and eastern Burma, the government, Tatmadaw, concerned EAOs and Chinese government including Chinese military form a representative organization (committee), so that problems along the China-Burma border could be resolved, leading to peace and tranquillity;<sup>14</sup>

As one might expect, the UWSA's reliance on China, and the UNFC's reliance on the KIO and the UWSA, suggests that China will influence future policy decisions not only for those groups on the border but also as far away from the Chinese border as Mon and Rakhine States.

It is understandable that China has a vested interest in securing its border and therefore should be included. However, the ascendance of the UWSA in attempting to decide future ethnic policy for those non-signatories regardless of location should be of concern. The UWSA has sought to secure a position as a leader of all non-signatory groups. Perhaps the greatest concern emerged most recently at the latest meeting of armed groups based on the Eastern border. As noted earlier, the March 2016, Ethnic Armed Organizations leaders' Summit at the end of March consolidated the UWSA's new position in relation to armed ethnic resistance.

After the summit, the following statement was released

Ethnic Armed Organizations leaders' Summit held from 26-28 March 2016 at Pang Kham Town. 34 representatives from UWSP/UWSA, KIO/KIA, SSPP/SSA, PSLF/TNLA, ULA/AA and NDAA attended. Representatives frankly discussed current internal political affairs and agreed as the followings.

1. All organizations desired to cooperate with the new government and agreed to undertake political dialogue in accordance with the agreements from the two previous Pang Kham Summits. All agreed to create conducive circumstances in order to carry out domestic peace.
2. Conflict between RCSS and TNLA in Northern Shan State was discussed at the meeting and both sides are urged to immediately halt hostilities. Both sides are encouraged to solve the problem through negotiation mean. In case, one side keeps creating conflict, all EAOs agreed to collectively prevent and protect from it. Simultaneously, we demand Tatmadaw immediately cease all military offensives in Northern Shan State for the sake of the stability for the people living in the areas.<sup>15</sup>

The issue in point number 2 which is primarily a direct threat against the RCSS should be particularly worrying. Kyi Myint, a spokesperson for the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) was quoted as saying after the meeting,

Our ethnic armed forces will take action jointly if they [aggressors] continue to fight, or try to control others' areas of control.<sup>16</sup>

Following the TNLA's line, and for that matter the UNFC's, which blames the inter-ethnic conflict on the RCSS signing the NCA he continued,

There was fighting between Ta'ang and RCSS . . . This fighting broke out just after the signing of the NCA. The RCSS took advantage by signing the NCA, then fought others to get more territory under its control.<sup>17</sup>

The RCSS and the UWSA have had a troubled history in relation to conflict. In 2002, the UWSA assisted by the Myanmar Army were involved in attacks against the SSA-S. In April 2005, fighting occurred between the UWSA and RCSS in the Mong Ton area of northern Shan State, opposite Thailand's Mae Hong Son province.<sup>18</sup> According to one report,

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Since the beginning of the conflict, three SSA-S soldiers have died and 21 have been injured, compared with 125 casualties and 185 injured on the UWSA side.<sup>19</sup>

SSA leader Chao Yawd Serk was quoted in Thai media as saying that

. . . peace talks between the two warring sides in Mae Sai district, Chiang Rai, was a clear indication that UWSA representatives wanted to “fight first, talk later” in line with Rangoon’s wishes.<sup>20</sup>

The UWSA was again allegedly supported by the Myanmar Army with the same report stating that,

. . . heavily-armed Burmese troops from Kengtung were marching to Ban Mai Lan to reinforce the Wa forces.<sup>21</sup>

By the end of April, media reported that the UWSA had suffered 700 casualties and an increasing number of defections. The SSA-S meanwhile reported only 73 deaths.<sup>22</sup>

Most recently, on the 16 June 2012, tensions flared when a number of Shan IDPs began farming rice and maize in areas close to UWSA positions. As a result, believing that the RCSS had violated their territorial integrity, UWSA brigades 772 and 778, based at these locations respectively, laid siege to the SSA’s Loi Gawaan base, opposite Chiang Rai’s Mae Fa Luang district,. The siege lasted until the 19 June 2012 when a 4-point agreement was made between the two sides. The agreement noted that:

The SSA agrees not to establish new bases closer to those of the UWSA

Non-encroachment on each other’s territory

Notification of one’s movements to the other in common territory

Agreement for Shan IDPs to resume their farming projects<sup>23</sup>

### The role of the UWSA in the peace process

The recent threat, not only by the UWSA but also the KIO and the other groups at the summit, should cause serious concern for the NLD government. NLD members met with the UWSA in Panghsang on 28 April.<sup>24</sup> A move that apparently caught some NLD members off guard, according to one media report,

Win Htein, a central executive member of the NLD, said no one had been sent to meet the Wa but added that the party had many members.<sup>25</sup>

It was later reported that Lower House MP Soe Htay, representing Kawkareik Township, Karen State, for the National League for Democracy (NLD) and a member of the Lower House Committee on Ethnic Affairs and Internal Peace had confirmed that the party had informally invited the United Wa State Army (UWSA) to join efforts in holding a 21st-century Panglong Conference. Although it must be noted that,

Soe Htay just completed his five-day visit to the Wa region *on his personal mission* to gather information that can help implement the peace process. During his visit, he met Aung Myint, a Wa leader.<sup>26</sup>

He was also quoted as saying

Aung San Suu Kyi instructed us to do our tasks actively but she did not give us direct instructions.

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Soe Htay, a former Tatmadaw officer who had previously served as a deputy commander in Panghsang, was then stripped of any important duties for a year, including his place on parliament's peace and ethnic affairs committee.<sup>27</sup> According to Soe Htay,

I went to the Wa region without informing in advance. Therefore, another person took my place in the committee in line with the parliamentary rules. Therefore, I no longer have a responsibility for peace as a committee member. However, I will give data I collected from the Wa region to the committee as I support peace, and I'm still an MP.<sup>28</sup>

He was also quoted as saying,

That area had been in peace since 1989. I've been to the Wa region before when I served in the military. However, I'd never been to Panghsang. During that time, if I had gone there, guns would have been pointed at me. This time, though, they welcomed me without hesitation. I went there not as a representative of the NLD but as a MP and a member of the NLD.

How the NLD will now deal with the UWSA remains unclear. What is quite clear, however, is that the UWSA is going to use fighting between the signatory RCSS and the non-signatory TNLA as leverage in seeking state level recognition from the NLD. Such a move would further exacerbate already strained relations with RCSS, but with those non-signatory groups joining together it is likely that the NLD will be forced into making some form of arrangement with UWSA to bring the others on-board.

While the UWSA has sought the leadership position of all non-signatory groups, its attempts have been stymied by at least some in the UNFC most notably the KIO. At a recent UNFC meeting, from the 19-22 April in Chiang Mai, Thailand, the KIO's N'Ban La purportedly spoke against the leadership going to the UWSA. It appears that while the KIO has sought support from the UWSA to strengthen its own bargaining power with the Government and Myanmar military, it is unlikely to allow the mantle of ethnic leadership to be given to the UWSA.

Since the first signing of an agreement between an armed ethnic organisation, the RCSS, and the Thein Sein Government in December 2011, individual organisations, and some leaders within those organisations, have sought to control the peace process. This constant vying for power and control has led to often highly dubious decisions being made due to individual groups seeking to use the veneer of all-inclusiveness to better serve competing interests.

There is little doubt that all armed ethnic groups have to be involved in the peace process. But, often individual interests, especially from larger groups, have been placed before the myriad needs of others. The UWSA proved in the 2009 Kokang conflict that it was not prepared to stand by its ally. The situation is now very different. While the RCSS, which is now legally recognised by the Government, has the right to call on the Myanmar Army for support, it is unlikely the army would support them if the UWSA was involved, this is something that all sides are aware of.

For now, it would appear that the non-signatories have been able to achieve a coup de grace in using the powerful UWSA as leverage for their individual and varying objectives. What remains unclear, is at what cost to Shan State and its people.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> 'No Political Dialogue for Wa without NCA Signing', SHAN, 16 September 2015
- <sup>2</sup> Personal correspondence with S.H.A.N. quoting Wa publication, 11 August 2010
- <sup>3</sup> 'Great Game East: India, China, and the Struggle for Asia's Most Volatile Frontier', Bertil Lintner, Yale University Press.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid
- <sup>6</sup> 'In Focus – The United Wa State Army', Department of National Defence, The Government of Canada, 30 November 2006
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> 'Tin Mining in Myanmar: Production and Potential', N.J. Gardiner et al., Resources Policy 46, 2015
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> The exact nature of the MPDF, also known as the Northern Alliance (or NA-5) remains unclear with suggestions that it also included the SSPP (email correspondence with ethnic leader 5 May 2016). A group known as the PDF was formed in 1989 with UWSA, MNDAA, NDAA and NDA-K, all former CPB guerrilla units. NDA-K later became a BGF. Email correspondence with source close to the peace process, 3 May,
- <sup>11</sup> Personal conversation with KNU leaders, 1 September 2014
- <sup>12</sup> 'At Ethnic Summit, UWSA Backs Rebels in Conflict With Govt', Lawi Weng, The Irrawaddy, 1 May 2015
- <sup>13</sup> Email correspondence with source close to the peace process, 3 May, 2016
- <sup>14</sup> 'Panghsang Summit Meeting, Joint Monitoring Committee and Military Offensives', Sai Wansai, SHAN, 4 November 2015
- <sup>15</sup> Unofficial translation
- <sup>16</sup> 'Ethnic Armies Pledge Talks First, 'Joint Defense' Contingency', Lawi Weng and Nan Lwin Hnin, The Irrawaddy, 29 March, 2016
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> 'Burma border fighting hits new pitch', Shah Paung, 27 April, 2005
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> 'Stray shells land on Thai soil', Subin Khuenkaew, Bangkok Post, 13 April 2005
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> [http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs6/Yearbook2005/Burma%20Human%20Righ/Rights\\_of\\_Ethnic.htm](http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs6/Yearbook2005/Burma%20Human%20Righ/Rights_of_Ethnic.htm)
- <sup>23</sup> 'Shan, Wa reach agreement', SHAN, 19 June 2012
- <sup>24</sup> <http://elevenmyanmar.com/politics/wa-rebels-meet-nld-panghsan>, accessed 2 May, 2016
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> 'Wa army invited to Myanmar's peace talks', Aung Zaw Tun, Eleven Myanmar, 2 May 2016
- <sup>27</sup> 'NLD punishes MP for peace mission', Htoo Thant and Ei Ei Toe Lwin, Myanmar Times, 4 May 2016
- <sup>28</sup> 'NLD MP dismissed from peace committee after unsanctioned meeting with UWSA', Eleven Myanmar, 4 May 2016