



Shan State Army Region 1, Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS)

Statement (1/2024)

Clarifying Misleading Allegations on the Tar Lay Operation

8 April 2024

In response to recent reports circulating in the media regarding operations in Mong Lin, Tar Lay, Tachileik Township, Eastern Shan State, in particular the allegations made by the TachileikNews Agency on April 4th, 2024, Shan State Army Region 1, The Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) (“SSA Region 1”) wishes to clarify our stance and actions taken in the area.

SSA Region 1 firmly denies any suggestions of engaging in extortion or receiving protection payments from the businesses concerned. Such allegations are not only unfounded but also misrepresent our commitment to the welfare of the communities we serve. Our operations are guided by principles of environmental stewardship and social responsibility, not financial incentives.

The operation in focus was driven by serious concerns over the environmental and socio-economic repercussions of unchecked mining activities on the Nam Mwe river and its surrounding areas. The Nam Mwe river, a cornerstone for local communities used for both daily needs and cultural celebrations, has suffered greatly due to such activities. The need to intervene became imperative to prevent further degradation of this vital resource.

Our intervention at Mong Lin, Tar Lay was carefully executed to secure equipment and halt operations that threaten the Nam Mwe river’s health, ensuring minimal risk to individuals on site.

SSA Region 1 is deeply committed to the well-being of our communities and the preservation of our natural landscapes. The reluctant decision to proceed with this operation was made only after repeated attempts to engage with the responsible businesses and local authorities were systematically ignored. Despite our earnest efforts to seek amicable solutions, the continuous neglect and disregard for our appeals left us no choice but to take decisive measures to protect the local population and the environment.

Our previous tolerance of these activities in the past years was an attempt to uphold the principles of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), despite the growing detriment to our communities. Our patience should not be misconstrued as a passive endorsement of the exploitation of our lands and people.