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BURMA | Army Targets Christian Mission School

Burmese military jetfighters bombed the Kachin Baptist Mission School in Bawmwang village, northern Kachin State, at 11 a.m. on May 12. While there were no casualties, the bombs hit buildings belonging to the school.

The attack took place while the villagers were at work on their farms. A two-story wooden building which used to be the mission office and clinic of the American Baptist missionaries and was later used as the main office of the Kachin Baptist Mission School was hit in the attack.

With the cooperation of the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC), the Hkahku Kachin Baptist Association has run a mission middle school in Bawmwang village since the early 1990s. Bawmwang village is located in Mali-Hkrang Walawng, also known "Triangle," in northern Kachin State, and is in the Kachin Independence Army's (KIA's) First Brigade administrative territory.

In recent years, the Burmese army's offensive has escalated in Kachin areas. The army not only target the KIA's military posts but also civilian areas including religious centers. Bawmwang is over 10 miles away from the KIA's Seventh Battalion. Concerns remain that the Burma Army is increasingly targeting civilians, following the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) visit to Burma from April 28 - May 1.

Hkun Htoi Layang of Kachin Relief Fund said, "It is outrageous that the Burma army targets a Kachin Baptist mission school. We are very concerned that the Burma army is targeting more civilians throughout Kachin State, with impunity."

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "We are deeply concerned about the recent serious escalation in attacks by the Burma Army against civilians in Kachin State. We urge the Burmese government and military to stop this offensive, and to begin a genuine political dialogue with the Kachin and other ethnic groups. We call on the international community to

condemn the bombing of religious and educational centers, and to press the government of Burma to allow unhindered humanitarian access to all parts of Kachin and northern Shan States. Furthermore, we urge the United Nations to take immediate steps to end the Burma Army's impunity."