



DRUG ISSUE REPORT

DRUG ISSUE FACT-FINDING COMMISSION

KACHIN STATE AND KACHIN SUB-STATE

2022-2023

Report on Opium and Narcotic Drug Issues

Kachin State and Kachin Sub-State

2022-2023

REPORT

Drug Elimination Committee, KIO

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
MSF	Medicine Sans Frontiers, Holland
BGF	Border Guard Force
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DIFC	Drug Issue Fact-Finding Commission
E	Ecstasy
EAOs	Ethnic Armed Organizations
KII	Key Informant Interview
KIA	Kachin Independence Army
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
KBC	Kachin Baptist Convention
K	Ketamine
PDF	People Defense Force
PTTs	Pyi-Thu-Tsit (Militia)
PJS	Pat Jasan (anti-narcotic movement)
REE	Rare-Earth Elements
SAC	State Administrative Council
TNLA	Ta'ang National Liberation Army
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime

SUMMARY

This report is the outcome of the survey on opium and drugs related issues focused in Kachin State, Kachin Sub-State and the townships adjacent to Kachin Sub-State in northern Shan State, carried out by the Drug Issue Fact-Finding Commission of the KIO in 2022-2023. The survey was done by 7 survey teams in 8 localities, emphasizing opium cultivation drug trafficking, and drug distribution.

Survey result shows:

- During the opium growing season of 2022-2023, among the total acreage of 11,303.4 hectares of opium farms, 4,108.53 hectares are in Kachin State, and 7,194.61 in Northern Shan State.
- According to DIFC's 2019-2020 data, there were 13,599.93 hectares of opium farms in Kachin State and Northern Shan State, in comparison of the data it can be seen that opium farms decreased by 9%.
- During 2022-2023 season, acreage of opium farms in Putao, Sumprabum, and Danai is 4,108.53 and it dropped by 22%. The acreage dropped in these townships due to KIO yearly opium farm destruction campaigns.
- Despite all the opium farms are located within the areas controlled by either the Tatmadaw or the BGFs and PTTs which are under the command of the Tatmadaw, UNODC's Opium Survey 2023 indicated that the opium production is very high in the KIO and EAOs controlled areas.
- Most of the opium fields in Kachin State are located in Sadung region east of Waimaw Township, and there are 3,404.75 hectare. Compared to 2019-2020 data, 1963.48 hectare of opium field dropped. There are 1001st and 1002nd Battalions of BGF, PTTs and Tatmadaw's Strategic Commands of Sadung and Pangwa stationing there.
- Opium fields in Northern Shan State are located in Namhkam, Kuthkai, Kunlong, Lashio, and Tan-yan Townships, and there are totally 7,194.61 hectares of opium fields. PTTs forces such as Panse, Kawngkhka, Lungtang, Shauhaw, Mungji (Mungsi), Tan-yan and Kunlong Special Police Force, and many other PTTs based in the area. This area is under direct command of Tatmadaw Infantry Divisions.
- Heroin production sites are 1) along the Naurabum mountain range near old

Loimawk Village of Namhkam Tsp, 2) around Nawngtau plain in Mansi canyon at the boundary between Muse and Kuthkai Townships, 3) Nam-mwe valley in the near the old Humwi and Loimaw villages at the boundary between Muse and Kuthkai Townships, 4) near Chyawngkhkam Village at the boundary between Muse and Kuthkai Township [which had been destroyed by the 6th brigade of KIA], 5) around Mannoï Village of Kuthkai Tsp, 6) around the Manping and Chyauhung-chyai Villages of Kuthkai Tsp, 7) around Chyawngkhkam Village of Kuthkai Tsp, and 8) around old Manhpwi and Bangkung Villages on Saihkau Range at the boundary between Mandung and Namtu Townships.

- Mr. Ho Laofang of Lunghtang PTTs and Mr. Ching Fah of Shauhaw PTTs forces are leaders of opium production and they are operating the business by bribing the Tatmadaw. Some armed organizations involved in the business by protection and safeguarding.
- Heroin and yama (methamphetamine) are trafficked into Kachin State via Muse-Namhkam-Bhamo-Katha route and Muse-Kuthkai-Lashio-Mandalay-Mohnyin route.
- Heroin and yama are trafficked into China via Panse-Namhkam/Munggu (Mungko)/Hpawngseng/Pangsai/Muse or Kunlong-Chingshuihaw-Laogai (Laukkai) routes.
- Opium cultivation, drug production, and distribution, all these businesses are carried out under protection of PTTs, corrupted Tatmadaw officers and Myanmar Police Forces. Only the end users and small-scale retailers usually get arrested and the mass producers and wholesale dealers are mostly out of reach.
- Narcotic drugs are easily available even in the prisons. Some corrupted police and penitentiary officers are making money by smuggling drugs into the prisons. The drug price is doubled in the prisons, though.
- Every year, opium cultivation, drug production, abuse, and trafficking increase freely, and since the price is dropping, it is getting more difficult to eliminate the narcotic drug problems.
- After Tatmadaw's coup-de-tat in February 2021, opium cultivation, drug production, and trafficking can be done in abundance that advanced drugs such as K (ketamine), E (ecstasy), and Happy Water, which are easily avail-

able in night-clubs and KTVs, become widely popular among the urban youths.

- In order to mitigate the drug problems, Myanmar government should strengthen law enforcement to be effective, and should take action against the corrupted officers involved in drug businesses. The PTTs, BGFs, and the Tatmadaw which are deeply involved in drug businesses should be strictly controlled.
- Government should support or provide necessary assistances to the CSOs participating in anti-narcotic campaigns.
- International organizations such as UNODC should dive deeper to get true story of drug problems sprawled under SAC's administration, so that they could warn or take action against the SAC.

Introduction: Aims of the Report

It has been two years and eight months since the military coup on 1st February 2021, and formation of State Administration Council until this report is been compiling. During more than two years of SAC administration, drug problems have been increasing and some new drugs which were not known in the region before, such as happy water, ketamine, and ecstasy became so popular among the youths. This report is to pinpoint the ground situation of opium cultivation, drug production, trafficking, distribution and abuse in Kachin State and Northern Shan State.

It aims to let the citizens and international community know the true story related to narcotic drugs since the junta took the power on 21st February 2021 and to identify the links between drug lords and BGFs, PTTs which are under control of the Tatmadaw.

Since the KIO's Central Opium and Narcotic Drug Elimination Committee had formed the Drug Issue Fact-Finding Commission on 18th January 2018, the commission has been continuously exploring the drug related issues. DIFC teams had conducted field research on opium cultivation, drug production, trafficking, distribution, and abuse between February 2022 and August 2023, and all the data had been collected during April-August of 2023. Data collection sites were in Kachin State and Northern Shan State where drug related problems are most serious. Data processing, analyzing and report compiling stages are done during September-October of 2023.

This report emphasizes on opium field location and acreage, drug production, trafficking, distribution, and abuse, and involvement of Tatmadaw, police force, PTTs, and BGF in narcotic drug business, and implementation of law enforcement as well.

BACKGROUND

KIO had laid the anti-narcotic drug policy since 1964. Since the 1970s opium cultivation, trafficking, and abuse had increased in Kachin regions. Since 1980s heroin abuse multiplied. There were too many heroin abuses in jade mines, gold mines, and urban areas.

Because of drug abuses, many youths missed the education opportunities, failed the vocational skills, and lost properties, even ruined families and fatality due to infectious diseases also arose. Due to high younger-deaths rate in the communities, population also deflated. Too many people were imprisoned that there were no sufficient workforces even to carry out social services. Thus, drug annihilation policy was prioritized as a national obligation. Therefore, operation against heroin was launched in 1988.

The KIC (Kachin Independence Council) declared the “Opium Free State” on 15th April, 1991 and issued an order banning opium cultivation, the followed by the order banning transportation and distribution of narcotic drugs on 15th October. However, there were still many drug abuses, so that the Narcotic Drug Annihilation Committee was formed on 9th October, 1993 in order to take further step in drug eliminating effort. The committee published several documents regarding orders, notifications, instructions, announcements and flyers were distributed. The drug annihilation committees were formed in every level of administration to raise awareness among own personnels and public as well. Investigation, trial, and detention camps were established. Every township opened drug rehabilitation centers to help users quit the drugs. These centers provided vocational training such as agriculture and livestock breeding.

On 25th October, 1993, the KIC issued an order that the drug abusers, dealers, opium growers, traffickers would be taken severe action. That order was amended three times depending on situation, and is still in use. Because of such policy, opium growers, drug dealers, and users are very rare in KIO controlled territories.

However, KIO and the Junta (then the SLORC—State Law and Order Restoration Council) had made a ceasefire agreement on 24th February 1994, henceforth, trade opportunity opened and population influx became out of control, and civil

administration also was confusing between KIO and Myanmar government. Thence, law enforcement also became very complicated and various type of narcotic drugs boomed again. The number of drug user arose among civilians and KIO personnels alike. Therefore, opium field destruction campaigns carried out by means of KIA troops and drug rehabilitation projects had to be implemented. Besides, for the good of the citizen KIO also collaborated with Chinese government in anti-narcotic drug projects and opium substitute crops program.

Nevertheless, drug related problems are getting worse so that the KIO Central Narcotic Drug Annihilation Committee, Special Taskforce was formed on 1st October, 2010 in order to strengthen the effort. Since the conflict between KIO and Myanmar government resumed on 9th June, 2011, narcotic drug annihilation works were carried out effectively within KIO controlled territories though, in the urban areas and the regions taken by the Tatmadaw the opium field multiplied, heroin and yama production and trafficking increased.

Therefore, a Kachin youth conference was held on 24-25 June, 2013 aiming to collect opinion related to narcotic drugs and awareness raising for Pat Jasan Committee, nationwide participation and faith-based anti-narcotic movement.

It was followed by a brainstorming forum participated by church leaders and community leaders on 24th February of 2014, aiming to collect ideas and on 17th April, Kachin Narcotic Drug Annihilation Plan was set and steering committee had been founded. Thence the steering committee had been playing active leadership role in public awareness raising campaigns, rehabilitation projects, actions against drug dealers, and opium field destruction tasks.

The steering committee of the Kachin Narcotic Drug Annihilation Plan then formed and assigned the DIFC to survey opium cultivation, drug production, trafficking, distribution and drug abuse in Kachin State and Northern Shan State region for the report.

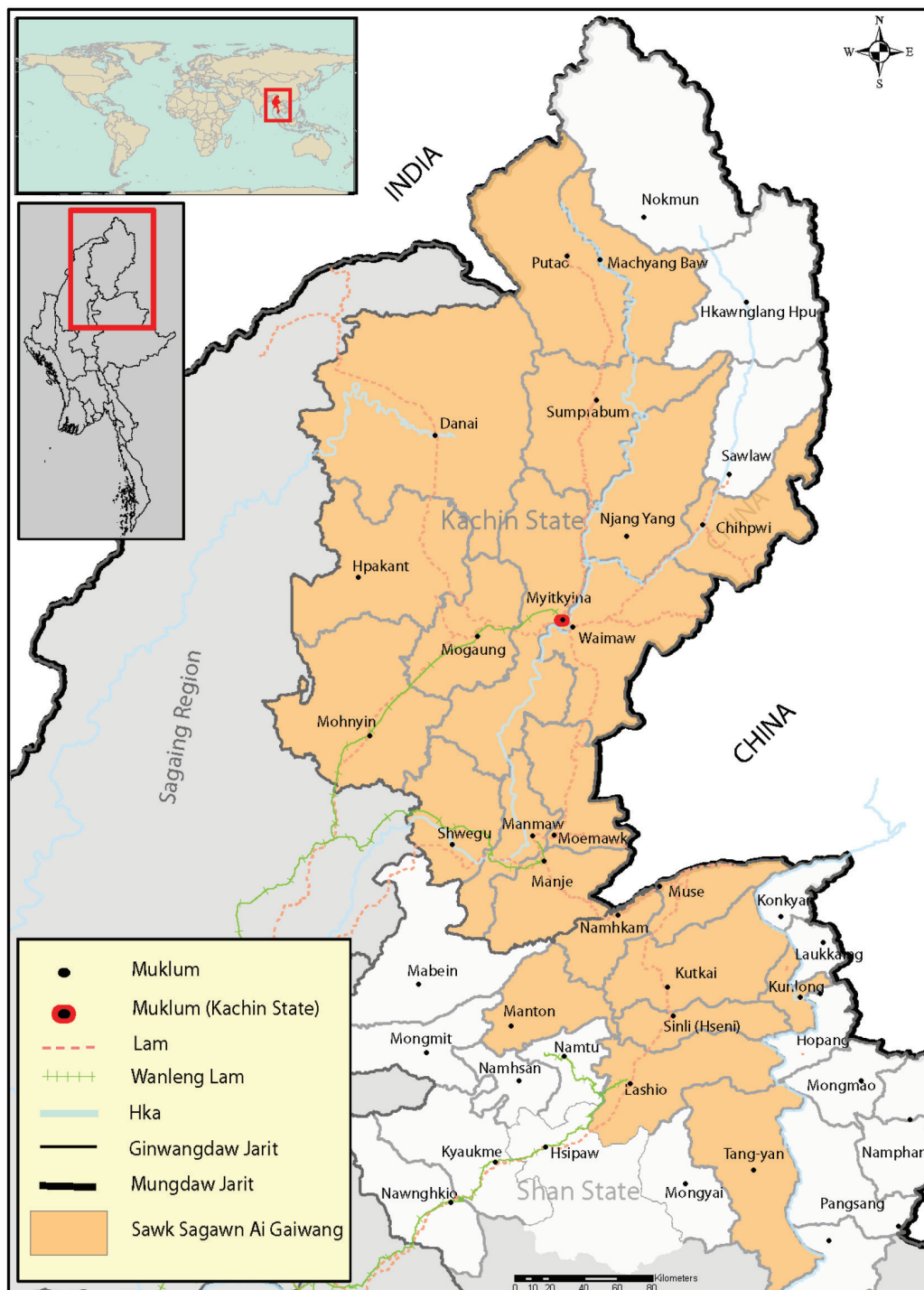
Scope and Limitation

When the DIFC started survey research, it was a time of military coup in the country. While collecting information about opium field and making interviews and collecting case-studies, there were many obstacles due to armed conflicts.

The regions where DIFC collected the drug-related data are Machyangbaw, Putao, Sumprabum, Njang-yang, Myitkyina, Mogaung, Mohnyin, Hpakant, Danai, Waimaw, Chihpwi, Momauk, Bhamo, Manje (Mansi), Shwegu Townships in Kachin State, and Mantung, Muse, Kuthkai, Lashio, Namhkam, Sinli (Hsenwi), Kunlung, and Tan-yan Townships of northern Shan State. The survey covered 294 villages and towns in 23 townships.

Concerning the opium field data, DIFC selected Putao, Sumprabum, Danai, and Waimaw Townships in Kachin State and Namhkam, Kuthkai, Kunlong, Lashio, and Tan-yan Townships in northern Shan State for survey areas.

DIFC's opium field data of 2022-2023 couldn't complete the field research in Chihpwi Township of Kachin State, where the 1001st Battalion of BGF control, due to safety concern. In Shan State, some areas controlled by PTTs in Muse and Tan-yan Townships couldn't be reached.



Map 1: Map showing the survey areas of 2022-2023

Methodology

1.1 Research structure

To initiate the survey, planning workshop participated by Steering Committee and consultants was held during 5-10 March of 2023. It was followed by research methodology, designing and questionnaire developing workshop. After that, the field research teams were recruited in a 60-days training on interview technique, data security, data collecting technique, photography, GPS application, and Kobo Toolbox.

1.2 Questionnaire design

Questions for survey are designed to be able to identify the location and acreage of opium field, heroin and yama production, trafficking, drug distribution, about those protecting and encouraging the drug businesses, and relation between KTVs and drug distribution. Kobo Toolbox is utilized to be able to upload all the collected data online.

1.3 Tools and techniques

Both qualitative information and quantitative information are applied in this survey. The region, technique, and types of information were decided while studying about the interviewees and location.

The techniques and types of information are:

- i. GPS points marking and photographing of the opium fields.
- ii. Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions
- iii. Case-study of those involved in drug businesses

Data entry, mapping, data processing, and data clarification jobs took 90 days. Data entry and data clarification were done in the Microsoft Excel. Mapping and location pin-point were made by offline applications such as Locus and Google Offline Map, and rendered on Google Earth Pro, then produced in Arc GIS 10.5 and Adobe InDesign software.

1.4 Selecting the interviewee

In order to get reliable and substantial information, interviewees were selected from various types, different profession, and different age groups of people. Categories selecting the various type of people are opium farmers, opium farm workers, those participated in heroin or yama production, drug traffickers, drug

dealers, drug users, SAC employees, lawyers, police officers, PTTs, BGFs, soldiers, politicians, civil administration officers, health workers, ex-inmates, school teachers, community leaders, Pat Jasan staff and committee members, religious leaders, women organizations, youth organizations, artists, CSOs and CBOs.

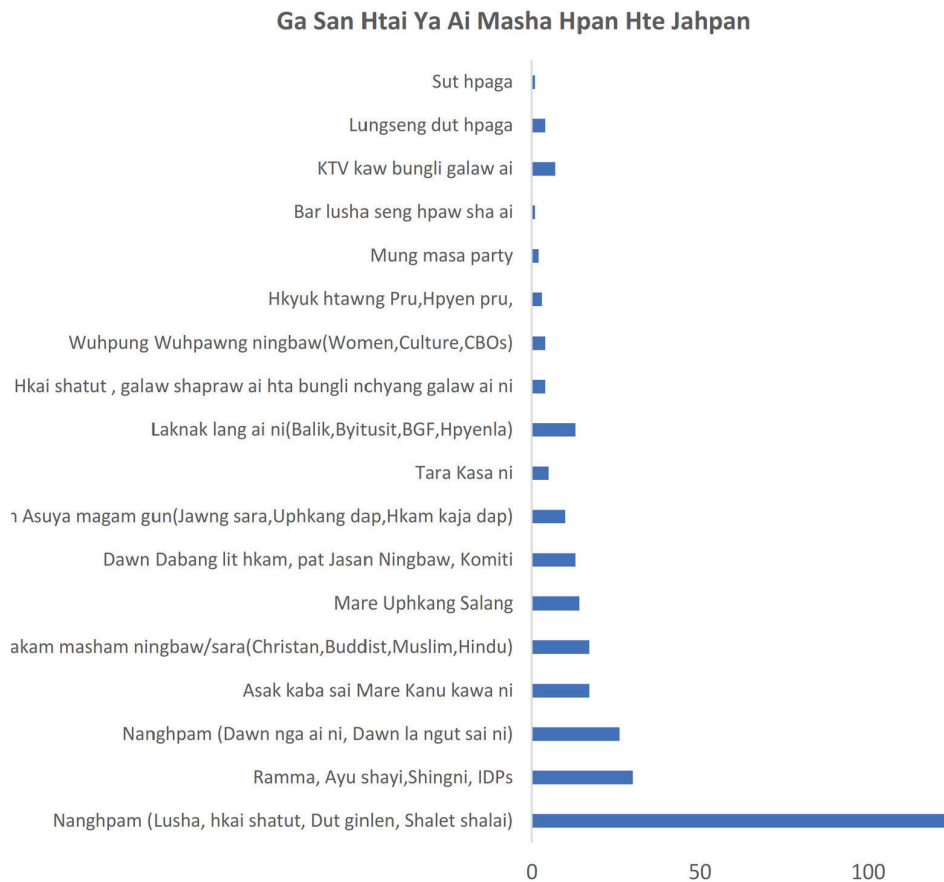


Figure 1: Type of interviewees and numbers

There were 340 interviewees participated in the survey, and most of them were drug users, drug dealers, and traffickers. The youths, women and artists are after them. The third group are drug users who are still in the rehabilitation center and those have already quitted the drug. All the police officers interviewed were from Myanmar Police force. Most of the soldiers were from Tatmadaw and some are from EAOs. Government employees are those working at court-house, and SAC civil administration department, school teachers, and those from health department. Among the NGO workers interviewed in the survey, some were from INGOs. The women interviewees were mostly the women organization leaders and committee members and some were ordinary people. Youth interviewees were both leaders and average youths. There were 84 women, 256 men, and totally 340 interviewees from 8 localities.

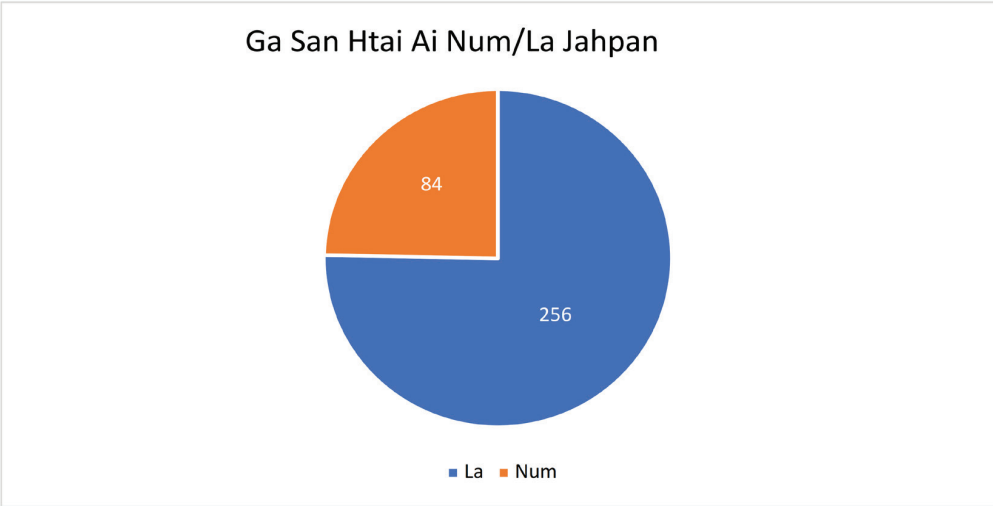


Figure 2: graph showing women and men interviewee

1.5 Data collection

Field data collection in 8 localities was done during 5 months period between April and August of 2023. Data processing, analysis and mapping of opium fields were done between August and October. Data collecting was carried out by means of Kobo Toolkit, case-study, surveying opium field, investigating the links between KTVs and drug distribution, and researching the drug refinery sites. During the field research, the time of research was varied from place to place due to the safety issue and transportation difficulty. All these data were

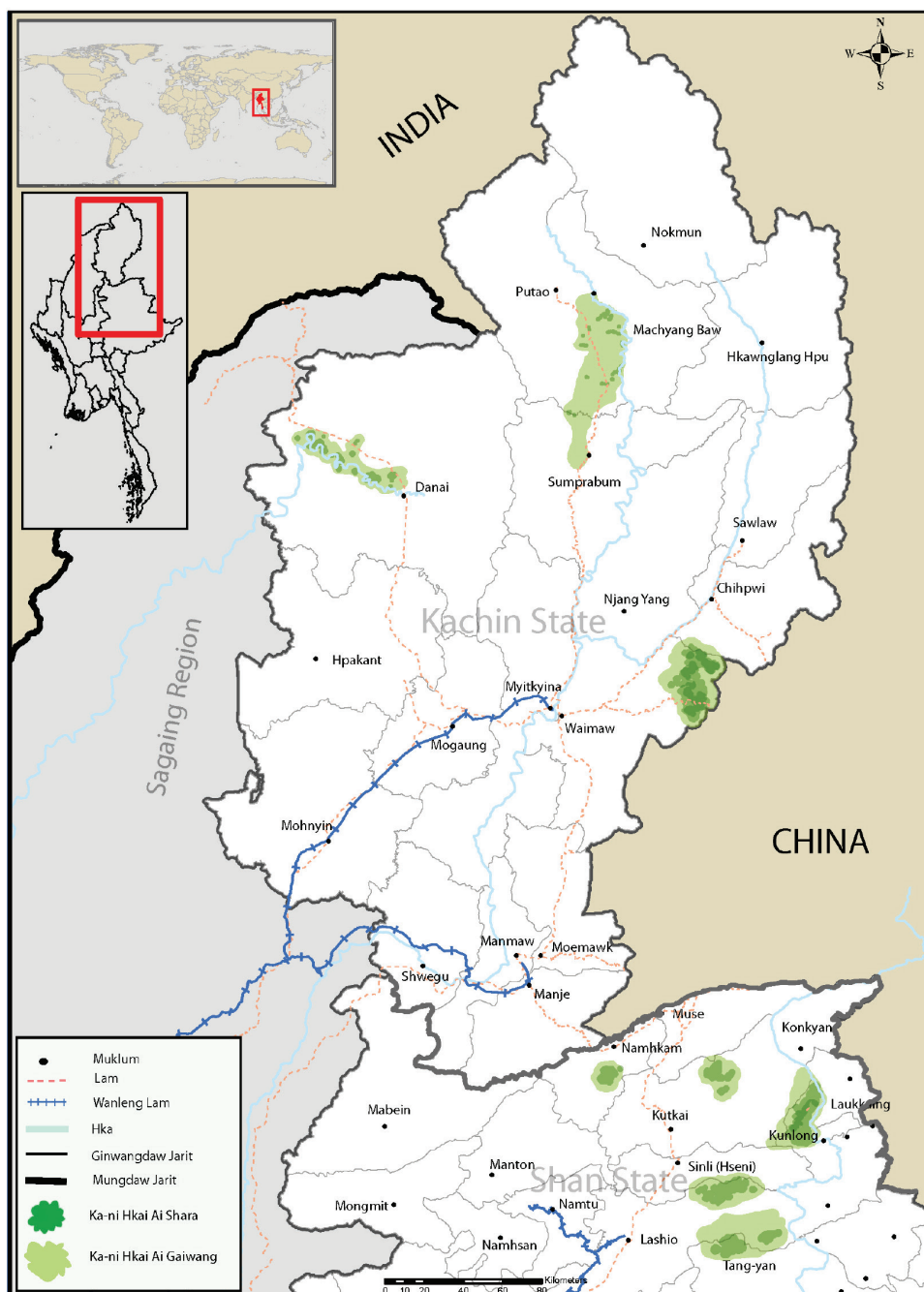
collected from the 8 localities in Kachin State and Northern Shan State. Survey teams were divided to respective localities. Designated areas were in the Sumprabum, Putao, Waimaw, Danai, Hpakant, Mohnyin, Bhamo, Momauk, Lashio, Hsenwi, Muse, Mandung, Namhkam, Kunlong, and Tan-yan Townships. List of survey team and localities were as follows:

Team	#of data Collector	Area (Township)
Team (1)	6	Putao, Sumprabum townships
Team (2)	13	Myitkyina, Danai townships
Team (3)	4	Shwegu, Mansi, Moemauk, Bamaw
Team (4)	16	Lashio, Kuthkai, Tangyan, Namhkam, Muse, Sinli (Hseni), Kunlong townships
Team (5)	9	Waimaw, Chihpwi townships
Team (6)	10	Hpakant township
Team (7)	6	Mogaung, Mohnyin townships

Table 1: Survey area and survey team

During the data collecting stage, it was very difficult to acquire detail information of opium field, drug production, trafficking, and distribution due to armed conflict and safety concerns. In order to get the data of the opium field in the vicinity of BGFs, PTTs, and Tatmadaw military post, special persons were carefully selected and assigned in the right timing.

The area selected to collect data of opium fields were Sadung, Kanpaiti regions of Waimaw Township, Danai Township, Sumprabum Township, and Putao Township of Kachin State and Muse, Kuthkai, Lashio, Namhkam, Kunlong, and Tan-yan Townships of northern Shan State.



Map 2: Opium cultivation areas in Kachin State and Northern Shan State during 2022-2023 survey

FINDINGS

I. Opium cultivation

In Myanmar, most of the opium farms are in northern Shan State and Kachin State. Opium fields are concentrated in the areas controlled by Tatmadaw or BGFs and PTTs. In Kachin State, the opium fields are in Putao, Sumprabum, Waimaw, and Danai Townships, and in Namhkam, Kuthkai, Kunlong, Tan-yan, and Lashio Townships of northern Shan State. Opium field acreage of Shingbwiayang Township (Sagaing Division) is included in the Kachin State data. Like wise, the data of Sadung and Kanpaiti region are included in Waimaw township data.

Depending on geographical feature, there are two method of opium cultivation in Kachin State. In Danai and Shingbwiayang Townships of Hugawng valley, opium is grown along the streams, and in Putao and Sumprabum Townships it is grown along the Irrawaddy River and its tributaries. In Sadung and Kanpaiti regions in Waimaw Township, opium is grown on the mountain ranges. Also in northern Shan State, opium is grown on the mountain ranges. The opium farm usually repeated in the same locations.



Picture 1: An opium farm in Danai during 2022-2023 season

As a result of opium field destruction campaign by KIO, the opium fields in Putao, Sumprabum, and Danai Townships dropped by 9% between 2019-2020 and 2022-2023. In Waimaw Township (Sadung and Kanpaiti), the workers who usually came to work in opium field shifted to rare-earth element mines in Pangwa area and Chinese citizens couldn't cross the border due to travel restriction after COVID-19 pandemic, that opium field acreage dropped by 22%. However, acreage of the opium fields from some part of Waimaw Township, which are controlled by the Tatmadaw, BGFs, and PTTs is 66% more than the total acreage of Putao, Sumprabum, and Danai Townships in Kachin State.

“Previously there were many opium farmers. But now there are fewer. For the KIO has been destroying the opium farms less people cultivate the opium now. Obviously, the Tatmadaw doesn't destroy the opium farm nor doesn't take any action against the farmer”

(a villager, Danai)

During 2022-2023, KIA had destroyed 33.25 hectares of opium farms in Danai, 95.44 in Putao and Sumprabum Townships, totally 128.69 hectares. However, they couldn't touch any of the opium farms close to the Tatmadaw military bases.



Picture 2: KIA soldiers destroying an opium farm in Danai Township during 2022-2023.

Most of the opium farms in Kachin State are located in Sadung and Kanpaiti regions, the area controlled by 1003rd BGF Battalion and PTTs. It is informed that there are opium fields around the villages of Tamuhkung, Hkamju, Jitloi and Lungza which are under control of 1002nd BGF Battalion too. But due to security problem, the survey couldn't reach to the area. Opium fields in Sadung and Kanpaiti areas are located on the mountain range east of the highway, around Wawhkyung, Shinchyai, Wutmaw, Badawn, Gazum, Maga, Lisu Maga, Lachik Maga, Htangmuhkang, and Ganawbum Villages.

Some villages west of Kanpaiti, such as Masa, Kungmai, Ngapyaw, Hkamkung, Yindam, Nawgu, Mawshidung, Salukhkawng, Tachyahaw, Langan, Luhtawng, and Bumling also live on opium farming. The Salukhkawng and Mawshidung Villages indeed came to exist from hamlets of the illegal Chinese opium farmers.

“It has been more than 40 years that the opium has been cultivated in Sadung and Kanpaiti. There are many Chinese migrants who sneaked in from China for opium cultivation and they settled down here. Some Chinese citizens living in the mountain out of reach of Chinese authority came to Kanpaiti and grew opium. As time passed, some of them even acquired Myanmar citizenship because of the election. Some of them hold both Chinese and Myanmar citizenship.”

(one of local community elders, Kanpaiti)

Sadung and Kanpaiti regions of Waimaw Township are under SAC's administration and 1002nd and 1003rd Battalions of BGF, PTTs, Myanmar Police force, and two of Tatmadaw Strategic Commands (namely Sadung Command and Kanpaiti Command) are stationing in the areas and they control the areas. As mentioned in 2018-2019 DIFC report, opium fields can be seen around the military camps and BGF barracks in 2022-2023 season too.

The survey uncovered that SAC government departments take protection fees from opium farmers and there is no restriction on opium cultivation. BGFs and PTTs levy certain amount of money or raw opium as tax on opium farmers. The tax may be varied depending on the size of the farms.

“In our region, opium farms are increasing around the military posts, and BGFs and PTTs bases. Unless the farms are close to them, the KIO would destroy them all. The SAC employees seem to be protecting the opium fields.”

An opium farmer, Sadung

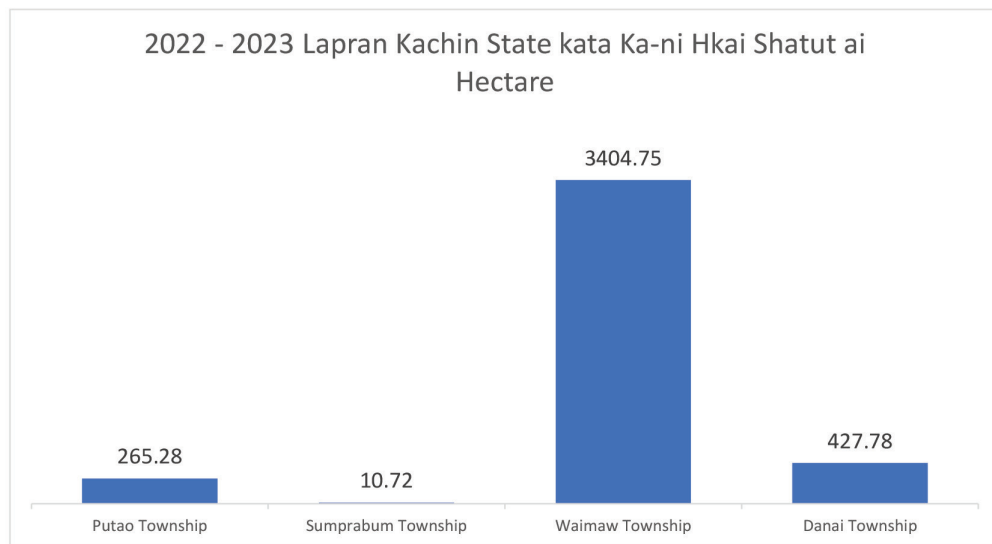


Figure 3: Opium growing townships and acreage in Kachin State, 2022-2023

During the 2022-2023 opium season, there are totally 4,108.53 hectares in the four townships of Kachin State. In figures by townships, 427.78 in Danai Township, 10.72 in Sumprabum, 265.28 in Putao, and 3,404.75 in Waimaw. Compared to 6,383.89 hectares of 2019-2020 data, the acreage dropped by 11%. The reasons of opium field decline are that KIO destroying the farm every year, some opium farm areas in Putao and Sumprabum had been used for gold mining, most of the labor force joined the gold mines, and due to China's COVID-19 protection measure, Chinese investors couldn't come to operate opium farms and some local people worked in REE mines in Pangwa.

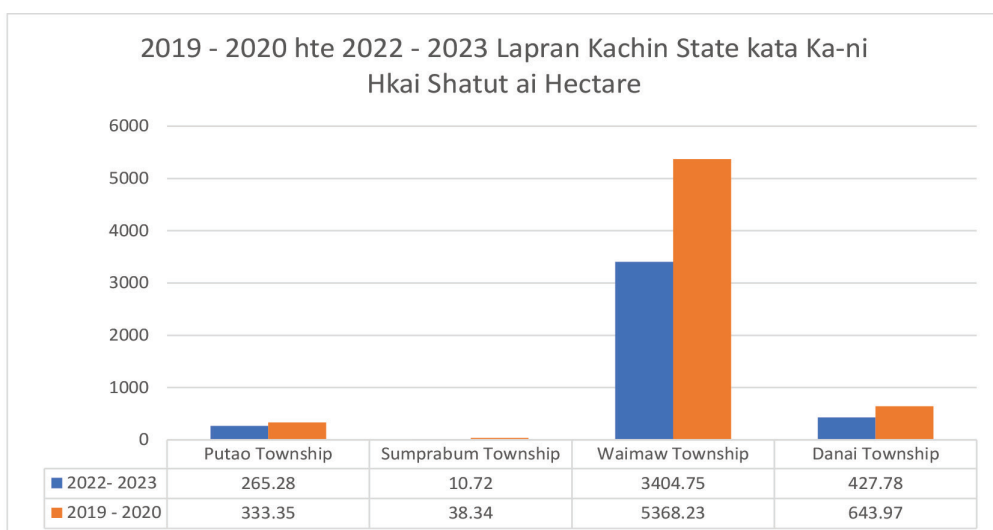


Figure 4: Graph comparing the opium growing townships and acreage of 2019-2020 and 2022-2023 data

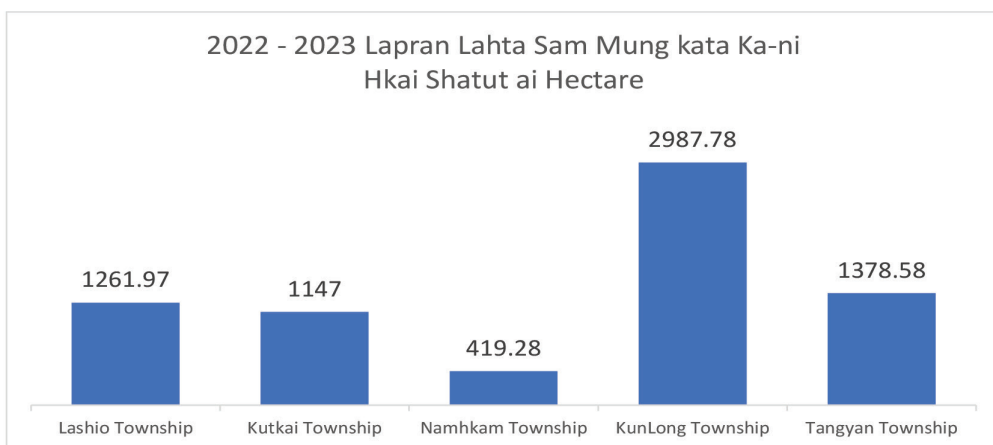


Figure 5: Opium growing townships in Northern Shan State and acreage, 2022-2023

There are 7,194.61 hectares of opium fields in the five opium growing townships of northern Shan State. DIFC's 2022-2023 survey could identify 1,261.97 hectares of opium fields in Lashio Township, 1,147 hectares in Kuthkai, 419,28 in Namhkam, 2,987,78 in Kunlong, and 1,378.58 in Tan-yan. In some township, KIO had been destroyed the opium that it can be seen the acreage had dropped. During the 2022-2023 season, KIO had destroyed 109.27 hectares of opium farms. Compared to

DIFC’s 2019-2020 data, opium acreage had dropped by 3% in Lashio Township, 12% in Kuthkai, 4% in Namhkam, and 14% in Tan-yan, and there is no any change in Kunlong.

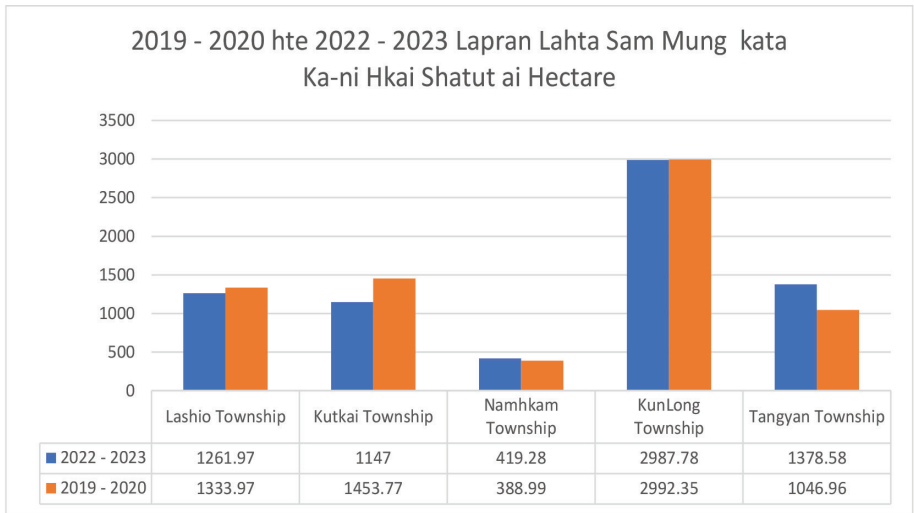


Figure 6: Opium growing townships in Northern Shan State and acreage, 2019-2020 and 2022-2023

There are 4,108.53 hectares of opium fields in Kachin State, and 7,194.61 hectares in Northern Shan State, totally 11,303.14 hectares in 2022-2023 season. Most of the opium fields (64%) located in Northern Shan State, and 36% in Kachin State.

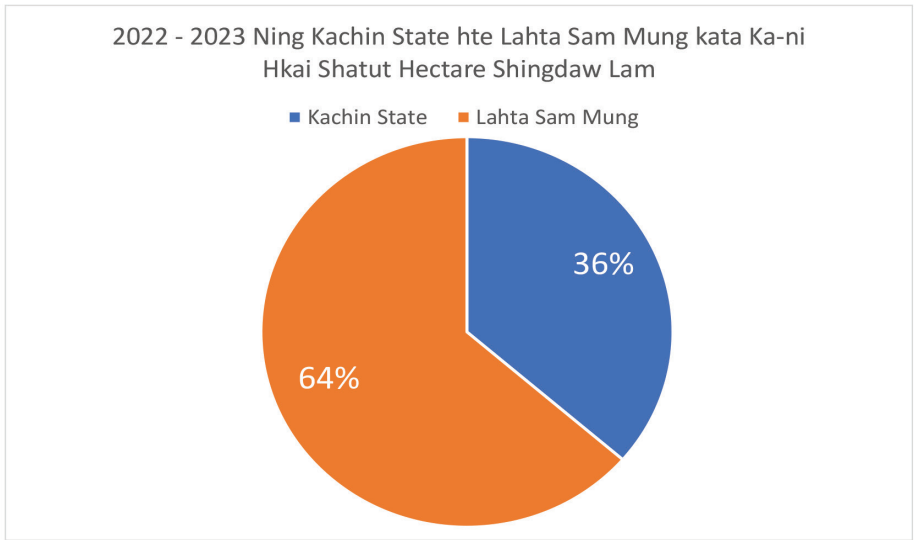


Figure 7: Comparison of opium field acreage between Kachin State and Northern Shan State, 2022-2023

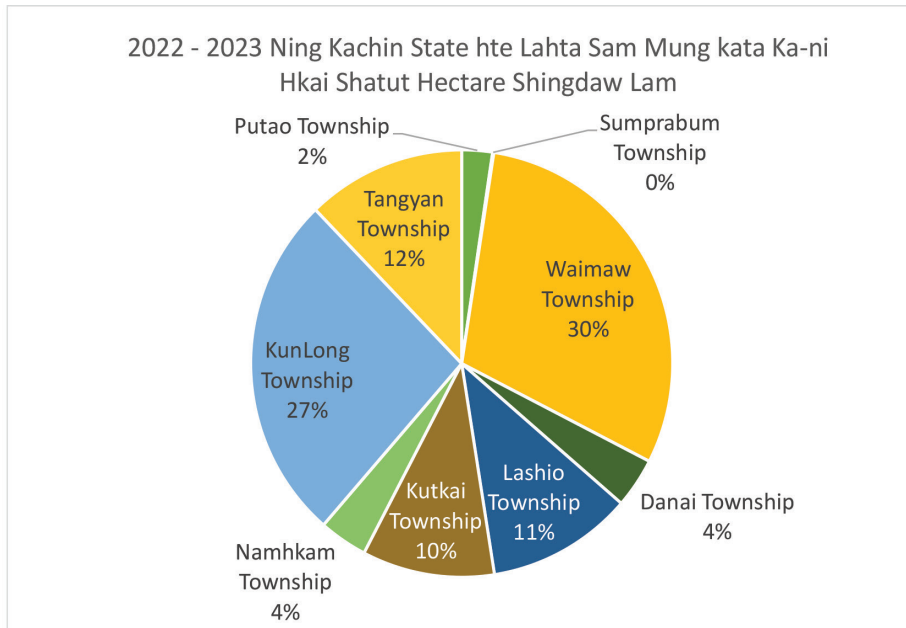


Figure 8: Opium filed percentage by townships of Kachin State and Northern Shan State, 2022-2023

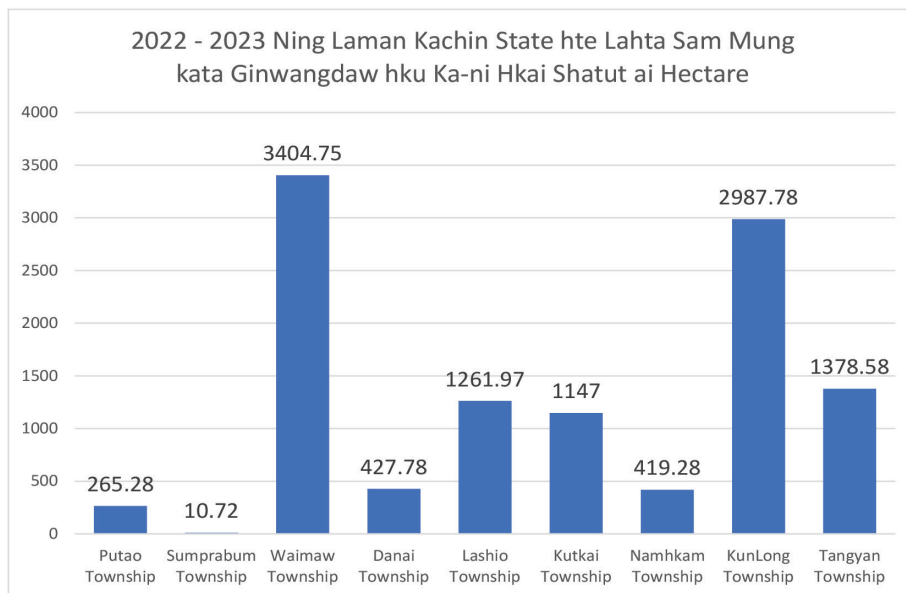
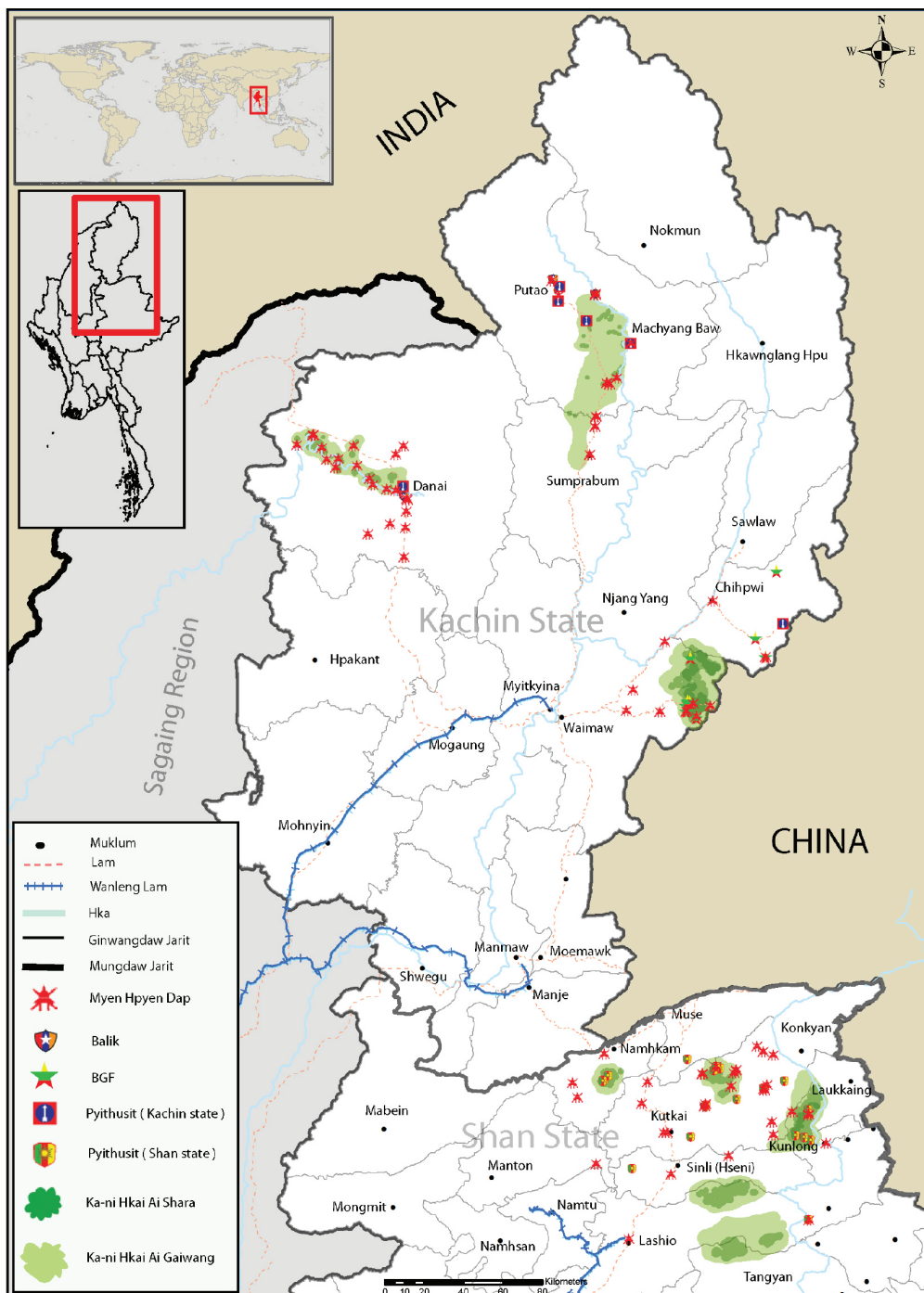


Figure 9: Opium field acreages by townships of Kachin State and Northern Shan State, 2022-2023



Map 3: Map Showing the Opium Field Locations and Tatmadaw, Pyi-Thu-Tsit and BGFs Bases, 2022-2023

Around the opium fields in Putao Township, there are 9 Tatmadaw camps, 2 police stations, and 2 of Danggu Tang Pyi-Thu-Tsit Posts. In Danai Township, 22 Tatmadaw camps, 1 police station, and 2 of Lisu Pyi-Thu-Tsit posts. In Sumprabum, 3 Tatmadaw camps. And there are 6 Tatmadaw camps, and 19 of PTTS and BGF posts around the opium fields in Waimaw Township.

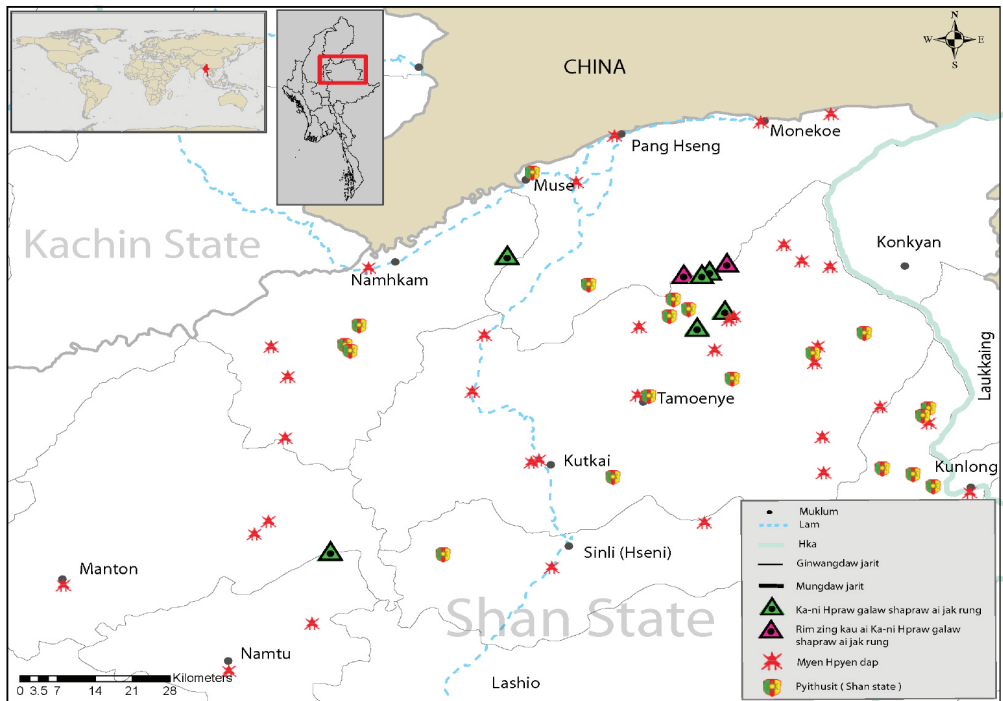
Within Kuthkai Township of Northern Shan State, there are 24 Tatmadaw camps, 2 police stations, and 10 PTTs posts around or near the opium fields. There are 4 PTTs posts and 4 Tatmadaw camps near opium fields. These areas are indeed, directly administered by the PTTs. In Kunlong, there are 4 Tatmadaw camps, 8 of PTTs posts, and Kunlong Special Police force around the opium fields. And 2 Tatmadaw camps and 5 PTTs post are near the opium fields in Tan-yan Township.

In order to make profit or survival of the group, PTTs and BGF groups impose taxes on opium cultivation, drug production, and drug trafficking and sometimes, the groups directly involve in drug business or sometime they invite the investors to do drug business on their behalf. The study uncovered that in order that the PTTs and BGFs may be able to run the drug business freely, they have to bribe the Tatmadaw for protection.

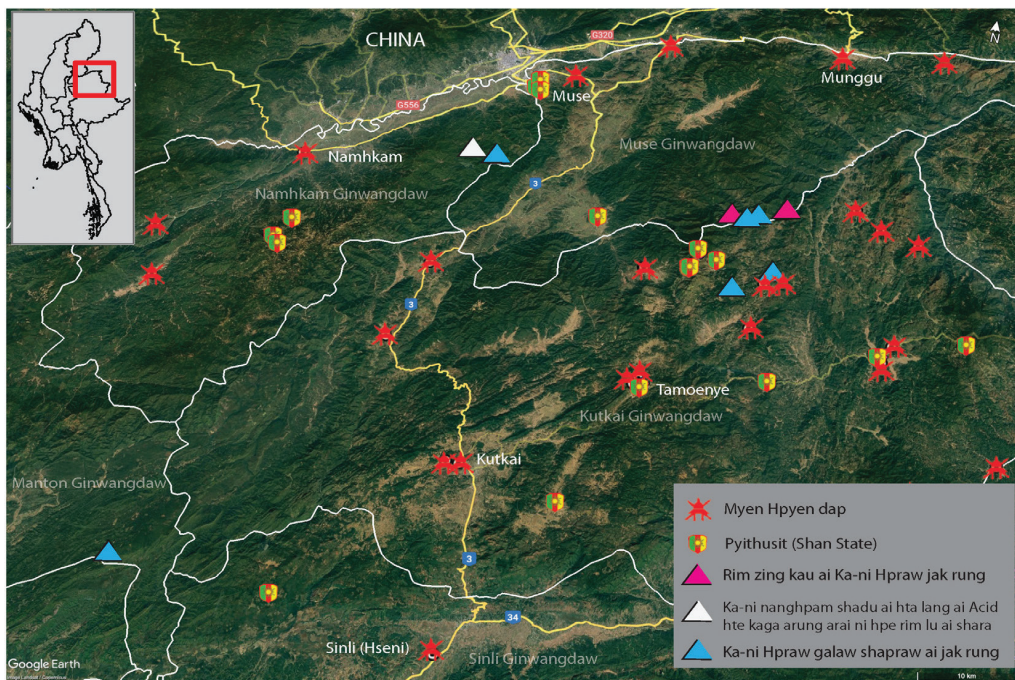
“There is opium field next to the fence of the Tatmadaw camp at Htamunghkang. Therefore, it is very difficult to raise awareness among the villagers not to grow opium. Furthermore, when an outsider came to the opium growing villages, they are highly suspected that the villagers always made inquiring questions. Especially during the sowing season and harvest seasons. During the other season it does not matter much.

“It is almost impossible for outsiders other than the farm workers, to go to those villages. The workers’ telephone would be temporarily dispossessed. And they are usually intimidated that if found out that there are information or photo of the farming activities leaked out, they would be killed.”

One village community elder, Kanpaiti Town



Map showing the location of Heroin Production Factory in Northern Shan State



Map 4: Map showing the location of destroyed drug refineries in Northern Shan State

II. Narcotic Drug Production

It is evident that opium production is declining while heroin and yama productions are rising in Northern Shan State. Yama can be produced easily without large amount of investment but as home production at any place.

During 2022-2023 period 8 of heroin refineries were uncovered. KIA troop intercepted the convoy, transporting chemical supplies for heroin production under protection of TNLA troop Near old Loimawk village in Pangmati gorge [N 23.857 22, N 97.843 143], on 2nd March, 2023, and all the chemicals were incriminated. On 4th September 2023, the KIA troop captured the drug refinery run by Mr. Ho Laofang and Mr. Ching Fa of Shauhaw and Lunghtang PTTs groups, at the camp [N 23.831 701, E 98.241 985] close to Lunghtang, Shauhaw, Daknai, Mannoï, Nawngtau, Hkaphawk, Sisa, Loimawk, and Manwing villages at the boundary of Muse and Kuthkai Townships. On 5th July 2023, KIA troop seized and destroyed another refinery [N 23. 818 74, E 98.180 21] run by the Lunghtang village elder Mr. Li Fuliu and Shauhaw village elder Mr. Yang Chin under patronage of Lunghtang and Shauhaw PTTs leaders Mr. Ho Laofang and Ching Fah. These refineries are being operated under protection of near by Tatmadaw officers in return of bribe.

Another refinery in Kuthkai Township run by Mr. Ho Laofang and Mr. Ching Fah of Lunghtang and Shauhaw PTTs in corporation with Tatmadaw personnels also had been identified in the area surrounded by Lunghtang, Shauhaw, Loijai, Daknai, Mannoï, Chyauhongjai, Manping, and Manje [N 23.719 128, E 98.189 025].

Another refinery located near Chyawngkhkam Village [N 23.814 525, E 98.199 714] at the boundary of Muse and Kuthkai Townships. This one also is run by the Shauhaw and Lunghtang PTTs in corporation with Tatmadaw paresonnels.

In Mantong Township, one refinery had been spotted on Saihkaubum Mountain [N 23.303 248, E 97.586 844] surrounded by Palasang (Loimawk plain), Manmaw, Mansa, Manhpiwi, Pangsang (Bangnosan), Manhong, Bangkang, and Manbung, Hkai-aw, Nam-yum (Zupja-awng).

The survey shows that the chemical used in heroin production came from Thailand and China, mostly China. The technicians in the refineries are from China. Also,

most of the investors are from China, and they funded the PTTs to be able to operate the drug business. It is evident that some EAOs and Tatmadaw alike, are involving in the business by taking opium tax and protection fees.



Picture 3: The truck seized by KIA on 2nd March, 2023 at Pangmati Village of Namhkam Township, while transporting chemical for drug production



Picture 4: The chemical containers were unloaded from the truck



Pictures 5: The chemical seized by KIA at Pangmati on 2nd March 2023 were being incrimated



Picture 6: Yen-suan or hten-suan (some kinds of acids in Chinese name) were disposed into the pit.



Picture 7: Yen-suan or hten-suan (some kinds of acids in Chinese name)

The chemical and utensils from a drug refinery owned by Shauhaw and Lungtang PTTs and seized by KIA on 7th May 2021 at the Nammwi gorge near the boundary of Muse and Kuthkai Townships.



Acid barrels used in drug refinery



Honpi being precipitated to be used in processing



Furnace for treating the hongpi and acid mixture



Yimming were processed through a series of glass jar



The heroin is solidified in the barrels



The heroin blocks were dried on the heated metal plates



Heroin crystals are dried on a layer of lime earth (CaOH)



Final heroin products are stored

Photos of heroin refinery at Mansi gorge near the boundary of Muse and Kuthkai Townships, run by Mr. Ho Laofang and Mr. Ching Fah of Lunghtang and Shauhaw PTTs under protection of Tatmadaw officers, and seized by KIA on 4th September, 2023



Picture 8: The opium refinery owned by Lunghtang and Shauhaw PTTs at Mansi gorge, and seized by KIA on 4th September, 2023



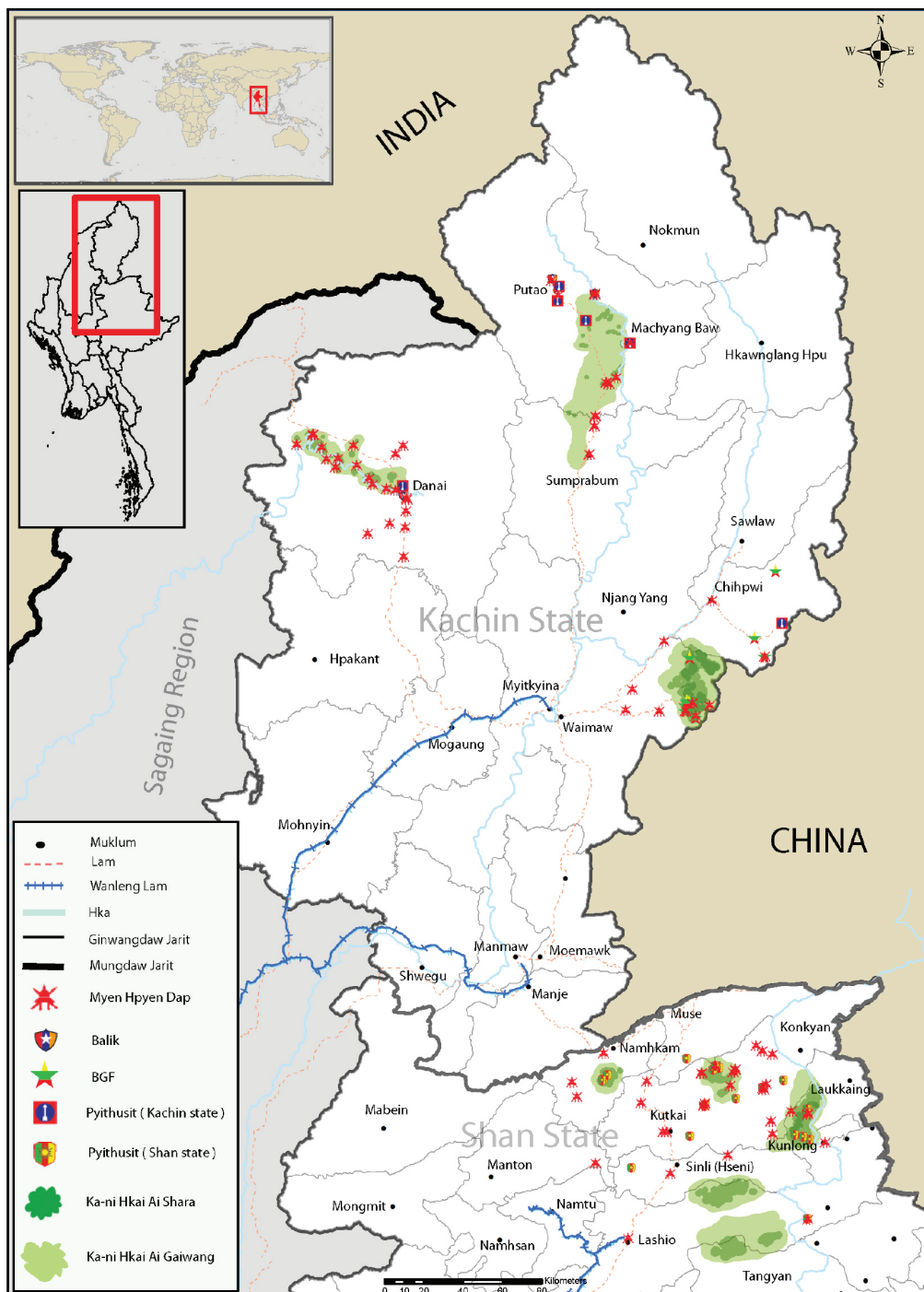
Picture 9: Heroin products seized by KIA on 4th September, 2023



Picture 9: Heroin products seized by KIA on 4th September, 2023



Picture 11: Refinery sheds were burned down.



Map 5: Map showing the opium trafficking routes, 2022-2023

III. Opium Trafficking Routes

DIFC's 2022-2023 survey on opium trafficking shows that most of the opium were produced in Kunlong, Kuthkai, Namhkam, Tan-yan and Lashio Townships of northern Shan State and Waimaw Twonship of Kachin State. It is evident that the opium from that regions are mostly smuggled into China.

Opium from Putao Township were smuggled into Machyangbaw, Sumprabum and Myitkyina. Opium from Sumprabum Township are then transferred to Myitkina. Opium from Danai Township are mostly distributed into the gold mines around Shingbuiyang, Danai, Kamai, and Hpakant and also along the Danai-Myitkyina, and Danai-Mogaung road.

Opium from Kanpaiti of Waimaw Township also are trafficked via Sadung-Waimaw-Myitkyina and Waimaw-Momauk-Bhamo and up to Mohnyin, Mogauang and mining sites in Hpakant and Danai, and most of the opium goes to China (see map).

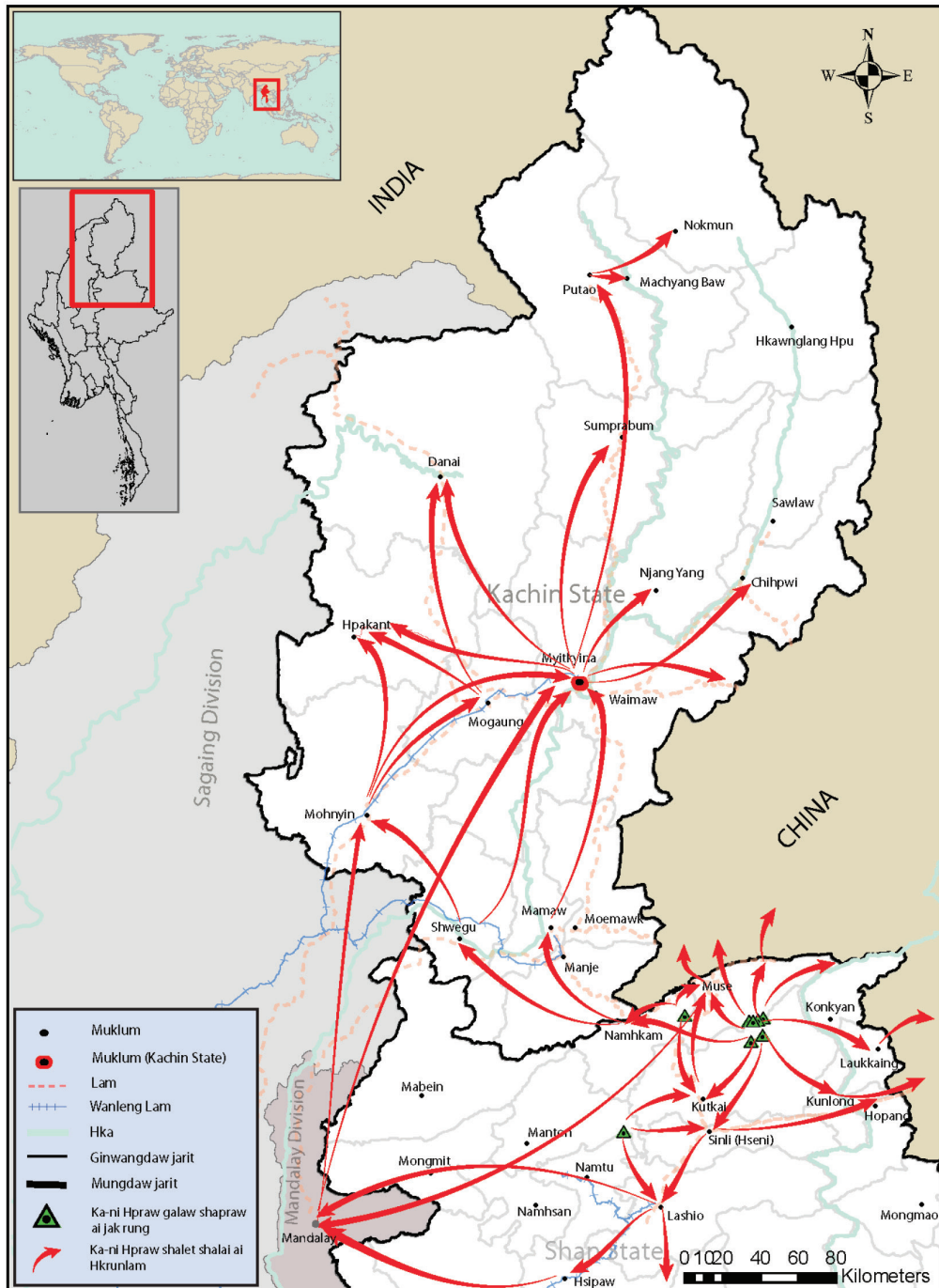
Concerning the trafficking route in northern Shan State, opium from Namhkam Township were smuggled via Panse-Namhkam-Mansi-Shwegu and Bhamo, Panse-Shwegu-Sagaing and Panse-Shwegu-Mohnyin-Hpakant, Panse-Namhkam-China, Panse-Muse-China, Panse-Namhpakka-Kuthkai, Panse-Hsenwi, and Panse-Kuthkai-Hsenwi-Lashio-Mandalay.

From Kuthkai Township the opium is trafficked through Kuthkai-Muse-China, Kuthkai Mungko, Kuthkai-Pangsai-China, Kuthkai-Laogai, and Kuthkai-Hsenwi-Lashio-Mandalay.

From Kunlong Township via Kunlong-Laogai-China, Kunlong-Chingshuihaw-China, Kunlong-Hsenwi-Lashio-Mandalay.

From Lashio Township via Lashio-Hsenwi-Kuthkai-Muse, Lashio-Mandalay, Lashio-Laogai.

From Tan-yan Township via Tan-yan-Lashio-Mandalay, Tan-yan-Kuthkai-Muse, Tanyan-southern Shan State.



Map 6: narcotic drug trafficking route 2022-2023

IV. Heroin Trafficking Routes

It is quite difficult to trace the trafficking route of heroin due to security concern. However, it is very clear that heroin and yama price in the Northern Shan State region is way cheaper than that of any region. And depending on the interview result and drug production site map we can assume that most of the drug originated in the Northern Shan State.

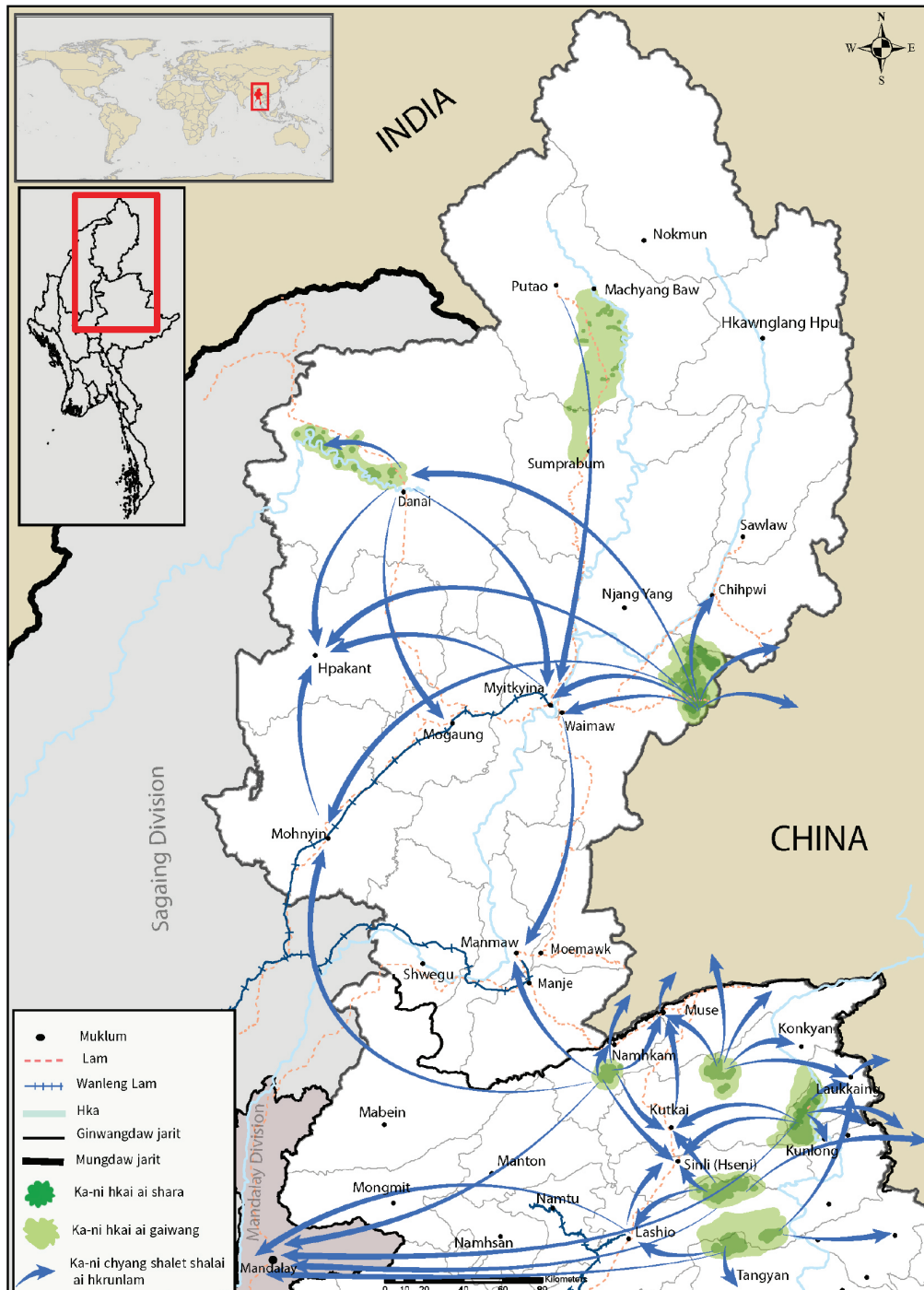
Major trafficking route of heroin and yama would be through Namhkam and Mandalay and reaching to market in Bhamo, Hopin, Hpakant, Myitkyina, Mogaung, Waimaw, Sadung, Kanpaiti, Chihpwi, Sumprabum, Njangyang, Putao, Machyangbaw, Nogmung, and Danai of Kachin State. Within Kachin State, price in Hopin is quite cheaper than that of any other region.

The major trafficking routes in Northern Shan State are from Shauhaw, Laojai and Lunghtang to Daknai-Dima-Muse-China, Daknai-Dima-Kuthkai-Hsenwi-Lashio-Mandalay-Sagaing-Mohnyin-Hpakant or Myitkyina and then to Danai or Sumprabum or Putao, Machyangbaw and Nogmung. From Manping Mungsi-Kunlong-Chingshuihaw-China, Nawngtau-Nawngkhkam-Mongko and Sis then to Hkahpaw-Mungsi-Laogai-China.

From Loimawk, Namhpakka-Kuthkai-Hsenwi-Lashio-Mandalay and to southern Shan State. From Loimawk, Zelan-Namhkam-Shwegu-Mohnyin and then to Hopin, Mogaung, Hpakant, and Myitkyina.

From Saihkaubum, to Lashio-Mandalay and southern Shan State or Saihkaubum-Hsenwi-Kunlong-Chingshuihaw-China, or Kuthkai-Tamungnye-Kawngkhka-Mungsi-Laogai of Kuthkai Muse-Namhkam route.

All the trafficking routes mentioned above originated in at some point of Tamungnye, Panse, Lunghtang, and Shauhaw controlled by the PTTs under command of Tatmadaw.



Map 7: Map of narcotic drug distribution 2022-2023

V. Drug Distribution

According to the survey result, it can be seen that the drug distribution flows more freely after military coup of 2021 and high price drugs such as ketamine, ecstasy, and ‘Happy Water’ are easily available in KTVs and night clubs.

All the drug dealers are running their business by permission from Myanmar military, police force, BGFs, PTTs and local authorities. There are different levels of drug dealers. Some are whole sale dealer with high investment, some are traffickers, some are on-call retailers. Whole sale dealers have to pay handsome amounts of bribe to Myanmar military officers, police force, BGFs or PTTs groups. Also small scale dealers and retailers have to pay bribe to every level of authorities.

Most of the drug dealers have contacts in police force. Whenever the situation comes, the police force would inform them in advance. It is evident, when the special narcotic police came to the region, local dealers were informed by the police that the narc couldn’t operate effectively.

Among the retailers, some act as brokers, some as sale person, some as agent and they make profit from their service. Some are user-dealer. The retailers would operate their business at the place they feel comfortable. Most of the retailers have to pay bribe to the police, military officers, and SAC civil officers on their demand.

“Before 2016, the sub-ordinates have to present bribes to higher ranks. That Township Officers or Station Commander didn’t go out much. Most of the tax (protection fees) collection were done by surveillance police officers. Later the taxes were collected as instructed by the superior officers. They would decide which kind of drug dealer or gambling house should pay how much. That means the dealers have already arranged direct link to bribe the higher officers.”

Police Officer from Myanmar Police Force, Myitkyina

Studying the map of drug distribution shown above, it can be seen that highest concentration of drug distribution take place in Myitkyina, Waimaw, Washawng, Hpakant, Hopin, Mogaung, Mohnyin, Bhamo, Danai, Sumprabum, and Putao. However, the survey also finds out that there are drug distributions in other regions

too. The area where drug flows freely are mostly in the mining areas such as gold mines and jade mines under SAC control. In some big cities, drug business flourishes freely.

In Muse, Namhkam, Kuthkai and regions directly administered by the PTTs of northern Shan State, drugs are easily available. Drug dealers in this region can operate their business freely under protection of PTTs and suppliers are Chinese investors and PTTs groups. Again, these Chinese investors and PTTs are operating under the permission of Tatmadaw officers.

“If we police arrest someone without consent from the military, they would take action against us or demote police officers. In one incident, during 2019-2020, a state level police commissioner from Shan State was removed because the officer himself led the operation to seize 3 drug refineries in PTTs area. He was transferred to Naypyidaw, and after 6 months he was demoted”

A CDM police officer, Myitkyina

Incident of arrest of whole sale dealer is very rare. Most of the inmate imprisoned for drug related cases are user-dealers and small-scale retailers. Drugs are available even in the prisons with doubled price. Those distributing drugs in the prisons are usually jailers (penitentiary officers) and police officers.

“Whenever we got information and raided the place, we couldn’t find any evidence or some time we couldn’t find any person. That is because of some of our police force leaked the information about raid. Our informants also played double-cross; they gave us information and on the other hand, they would inform the dealers about our plan. Even under police duty and right procedure, we couldn’t seize anything without superiors’ consent. I once experience that I fulfilled my duty and my superior officer make me trouble and was arrested.”

CDM Police Officer, Myitkyina

Statistics of Drugs Captured by KIO in 2021-2022

By studying the statistic of seized drugs, it can be seen that drug distribution had rosed during 2021. Comparison of drug seized by KIO during 2021 and 2022 is shown below. During 2021, KIO had seized 2,383,406 yama tablets, and 750,943 during 2022.

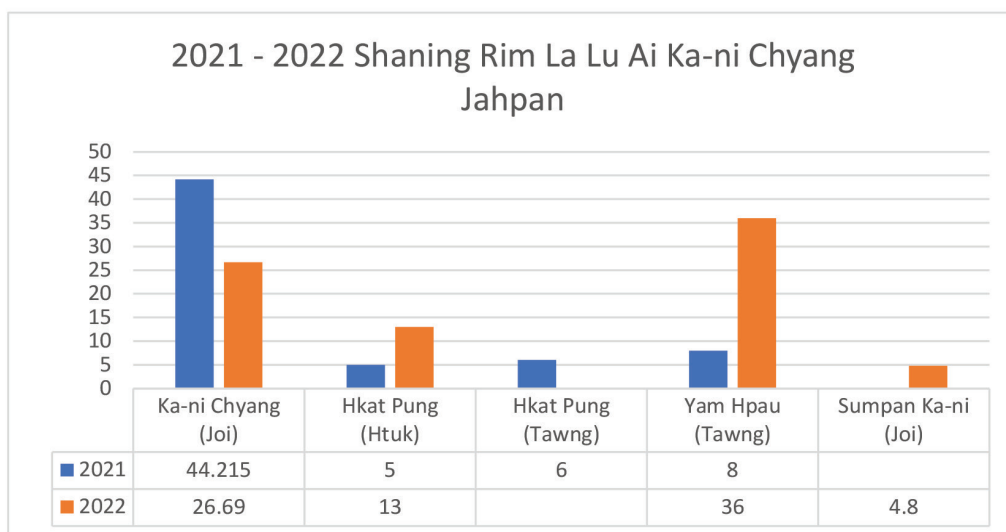


Figure 10: Comparison of opium seized by KIO in year 2021 and 2022

Note: Usually, raw opium is not distributed into market directly. Instead, they would be modified into various forms for ease of transportation and storage: 1) hkatpung is refined opium mixed with fine leaves which is used for pipe smoking. The hkatpung is available in two forms—package and balls; 2) yamhpau is pure opium which is used for pipe smoking; and 3) opium clothe—refined opium applied onto linen and dried. It is easy to store for long time and can be used in various ways.

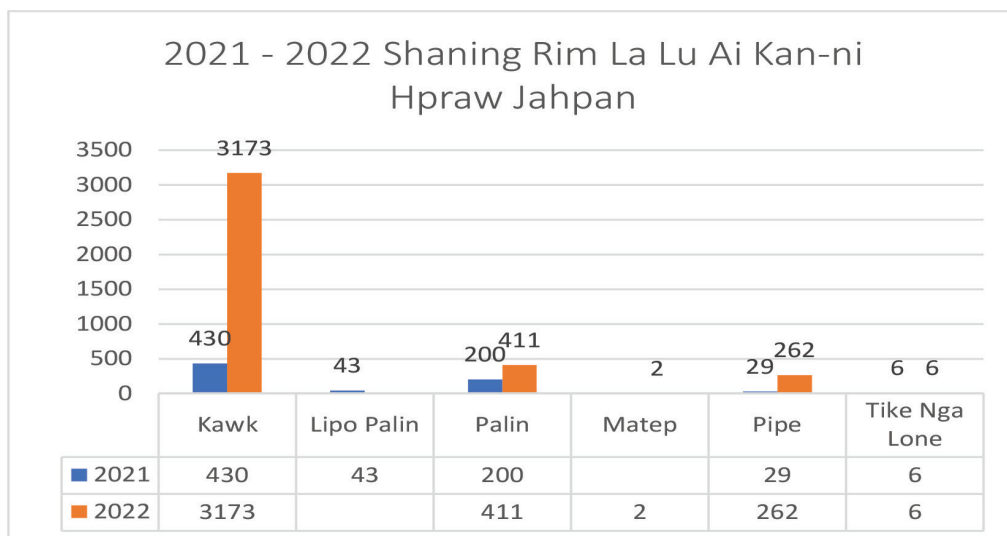


Figure 11: Comparison of heroin seized by KIO during year 2021 and 2022

Note: usually heroin is not transported as powder. It took several forms before it reaches to the market: 1) Cassette—for the ease of transportation, heroin is compressed into solid blocks and put in the soap-cases. This is method of mass transportation. 2) Lipo bottle – local distributors crush the heroin blocks into powder and then put in the glass bottles (especially the emptied ‘Lipovitan-D’ energy drink bottle about 100cc capacity) to be distributed to the retailers. Thence, it is known as ‘lipo’. 3) bottle – retailers would use the small glass bottle, usually emptied medicine container such as penicillin powder about 5cc capacity. 4) sachet – small-scale retailers would pack the heroine enough for one or two dose, with paper. 5) straw – small-scale retailers would sell heroin packaged in juice straws. Single or double dose of heroine is put into piece of juice straw and then sealed by heat. 6) five pagodas – sometimes heroin is packaged in tube-like metal capsules know as the ‘five pagodas’ to disguise as medicine. The ‘Five Pagodas’ is a renowned Chinese herbal painkiller powder usually marketed in small metal capsule about 2cc capacity.

VI. Drug Uses

Most of the drug abusers are miners working at jade mines, gold mines and rare-earth element mines, those who have family problems, university students, jobless youths, commercial sex workers, artists, and those working in entertainment industries. Most of them are youths and university students.

The root causes of becoming drug addict are by experimenting, makin fun, drugs are easily available, easy money, and unemployment. Injection of drug is more popular than inhaling among the users.

In Kachin State, the drug abuse is highest in Danai, Sadung, Kanpaiti, and Sumprabum Cities, and in Northern Shan State, highest in Kuthkai, Kunlong, Lashio, Tan-yan, and Panse Cities. In Myitkyina, Waimaw, Putao, Hpakant, Hopin, Mohnyin, Mogaung Inndawgyi, Bhamo, Momauk, and Loiye heroin and yama are most common drugs. There the retailers usually sell heroin in syringe-ready.



Picture 12: Heroin user IV injecting heroin

As the result of drug abuses, families are broken, community divided, morally corrupted, being imprisoned, lost life, and education, health, and economy are ruined.

“There are opium users, but heroin and yama are more popular among youths and adults in the region. We realized that some of our villagers died or got the infectious diseases. When we made medical check-up the drug users to be sent to the rehab centers in Myitkyina or Waimaw, we found out that most of them, about 75% already have HIV/AIDS or hepatitis B and C.”

Local people, Sadung

It is very difficult to make all the drug users quit the habit. If some one reuse drug after he or she had quit before, the dose would be doubled. By analysis on such experiences, we can see that lack of job opportunity, ineffectiveness of anti-narcotic effort by the civil administration, and negligence of the communities are the factors behind the widespread drug abuse. Especially, the weakness of government's narcotic drug laws, and corruption under military rule make it worse.

Since the military coup on 1st February, 2021, drug production and trafficking had increased. Moreover, entertainment centers such as KTVs and night-clubs have mushroomed, and the high-price drugs such as K, E and happy-water are openly available there. Since 2017-2018, these Ks, Es and happy water got popular in the cities along the border such as Muse, Laogai, and Wa region and also in Yangon and Mandalay, but later these drugs spread across the region and it reached to Myitkyina, Waimaw, and Hpakant in the year 2022.

In order to be able to market these drugs in KTVs and night-clubs, the dealers have to bribe the regional military commanders, police forces and government authorities, and some dealers operate the business in collaboration with Myanmar military, Myanmar Police forces, PTTs and some armed organizations.

“Most of the KTVs are operated in collaboration with Tatmadaw officers. That is why they can run the business day and night, freely even in times of unstable condition. K and E are easily available elsewhere in KTVs and night-clubs.

It requires a great deal of financial investment to run a KTV. They have to bribe to police forces and civil administration officer of various level so that even if they sell Es and Ks in the KTV, they wouldn't the officers would disturb the business. There are more than 10 KTVs in Hpakant, and around 20 in Myitkyina and Waimaw”

One of KTV workers, Myitkyina

These Es, Ks, and happy-water are expensive drugs that only rich peoples, government officers, and some youths can use them. It is informed that the cost of these drugs may vary from about 80,000 to one or two million MMKs. In the mean time, people are so depressed due to political situation in Burma, so people usually go to the KTVs or night-club to take K and E, or happy-water for emotional outlet. This is one reason for the rise of K, E, and happy-water use.

Most of the youth don't have money, so that they would take part in whenever the rich people invite them to party and they would waste their time for pleasure. Such incidents are increasing especially among the girls. In the KTVs, when high on drug, girls and boys will dance together and they became out of control. Some have sex and sometimes girls get pregnant. Therefore, abortion rate also is growing. The social problem as the result of use of K, E, and happy-water are moral corruption and STDs transmission.

VII. Drug related problem mitigating action

EAOs including KIO, religious groups, Pat Jasan groups, NGOs, CSOs, and INGOs have been working their best to mitigate the drug related problems in Burma. KIO is operating the rehabilitation centers and taking action against drug dealers and users. UN agencies and INGOs have been running harm-reduction activities, medication programs, rehabilitation programs, and awareness raising activities. The church communities and Pat Jasan groups have been trying their best by public awareness campaigns and rehabilitation programs.

Some INGOs opened drop-in center to provide syringes to the users as part of harm-reduction program, so that the retailers can easily sell the syringe-ready heroin and the injection habit became more favorable among the drug, especially heroin users. Distributing free syringes may reduce transmission of diseases, but it can encourage drug injection.

There are some measures of anti-narcotic action by SAC by means of law enforcement against drug business. However, the incident of capturing the drug lords with large investment or wholesale producer is almost non-existent. Only the user-dealers are mostly prisoned. The authorities took bribes from drug dealers, but on the other hand, they usually conduct horse-and-dog shows by burning the drugs confiscated from small-scale dealers.

Concerning opium-substitute crops, we can't see any improvement in Kachin State, so far. But, on 6th March of 2019, the former Chief-Minister of the Kachin State Mr. Hkyet Awng mentioned in his address to public at Mohnyin, that banana plantations in Kachin States are part of opium-substitute crops plan.

VIII. Law Enforcement

There is no comprehensive actions to handle the drug problems in Burma, in both legal procedure or administrative procedures. The government even don't give any support to the anti-narcotic campaigns carried out by the civilian organizations who actually suffer from the drug related problems, instead, the authorities even threaten or intimidate the civilian Pat Jasan activists.

While the military, police forces, and government authorities are taking bribe or protection fees from opium farmers and drug dealers, the law enforcement is totally failing. Since the military coup, there is totally absent of law enforcement at all.

The reason why drug business can not be eliminated in Burma is that the officers responsible for handling the drug problem themselves are corrupted and the Tatmadaw is backing up the drug dealers. Moreover, laws and jurisdiction procedures in Burma are unjust, and no one respect the laws. Most of the law enforcement officers are utilizing the law for profiteering.

The Tatmadaw had formed the BGFs and PTTs to be their tools, across the country. Government and the Tatmadaw do not grant sufficient financial allotment for the PTTs and BGFs that they have to find a way to support themselves. They need to raise fund for survival and for bribing the Tatmadaw officers, thence they operated the drug businesses, the easiest way to make handsome amount of money in short time. The study shows that the junta allowed the PTTs and BGFs to operate such illegal drug business.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The survey shows that the major source of opium and illicit drug productions are in the areas controlled by BGFs and PTTs in Kachin State and northern Shan State. It can be seen in the map of the opium field that opium fields can be found near or around some of the Myanmar military camps in Kachin State.

It can clearly be seen that the BGFs and PTTs can freely operate their drug business under the permission and protection of the Tatmadaw.

The BGFs and PTTs groups under the DIFC's Survey of 2019-2020 and 2022-2023 are Danggu Tang PTTs, Shweminn PTTs, Shan Ni PTTs, and 1002nd and 1003rd Battalions of BGF from Kachin State and Panse PTTs, Lunghtang PTTs, Shauhaw PTTs, Tamungnye PTTs, Namjawn PTTs, Mungsi PTTs, Targon PTTs, Tan-yan PTTs, Kawngghka PTTs, Mungko PTTs, Hpawngseng PTTs, Kuthkai PTTs, and Kunlong Special Police Force of northern Shan State. Heroin productions are done in tripartite collaboration among the Tatmadaw officers for protection, PTTs for hosting, and Chinese investors. Some EAOs also involved in heroin production by providing security.

The chemical used in heroin processing came from China and the technicians also are from China. It is studied that some of the heroine products are distributed into China too.

By studying the evidence that the opium and illicit drug business had been increased after the military coup in Burma, it can be assumed that the Tatmadaw is culprit and the source of drug-relate problems in Burma.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the survey findings, the DIFC makes the following recommendations:

1. In order that the illicit drug mitigation action would be effective, the Myanmar Government and all the EAOs should have substantial anti-narcotic drug policies and reliable laws and regulations concerning the illicit drugs, and should collaborate in illicit drug mitigation actions.
2. The Government and all the EAOs should implement sound and effective law enforcement against illicit drugs and strict action should be taken against the corrupted officer profiting from narcotic businesses.
3. Legitimacy of PTTs and BGFs who are producing and hosting narcotic drug production and the authority if Tatmadaw encouraging the business should be totally stripped off.
4. During the transition period of Burma right now, the international organization such as UNODC should collaborate with the EAOs who are carrying out the anti-narcotic actions.
5. Anti-narcotic activities implemented by civilian public should not be restricted, threatened or discouraged, instead they should be supported.
6. In order to raise awareness on narcotic drugs, it should be included in school curricula of every level.
7. The opium-substitute crops programs should be effectively implemented for farmers who really need the alternative livelihood, and there should be an independent monitoring body for that purpose.
8. For there are accusation on some EAOs regarding the drug business, they should be negotiated to make a nationwide concerted effort in illicit drug elimination action.
9. Most of the chemical used in drug refineries and drug processing technicians are from China. Therefore, the Government of China should collaborate with EAOs in order to eliminate cross-border illegal businesses.

DRUG ISSUES FACT-FINDING COMMISSION

KACHIN AND KACHIN SUB-STATE REPORT 2022-2023

DRUG ERADICATION COMMITTEE, KIO

Contact No : +86 159 6923 6886

Email : ginjawpatjasan@gmail.com