

## Stop Trafficking Our Mother Irrawaddy

We the people of Myanmar, with tears in our eyes, our hearts shaken by fear and sorrow, knock at the doors of our rulers and the international community. Faced with the sad prospect of losing our mother Irrawaddy, through Myitstone dam, to the greed of a superpower, every Myanmar citizen pleads with all people of good will to come to the support of the poor of Myanmar.

Irrawaddy is not a river to us; she is not a commodity to be bartered. She is the sacred mother of every Myanmar people. Her history is intertwined with the history of Myanmar. Like the jewel around the neck of our nation, Irrawaddy traverses through the whole nation crossing thousands of miles. She is witness to our sorrows, joys and wounded history. She is our hope, she is our destiny.

For a nation of agriculture, where 80 per cent of the people live by farming, Irrawaddy is an unfailing accompanier in their livelihood. Her Majesty, her dancing down the mountains, her mystic meandering through the soul of the nation, her generosity to the poor farmers, make Irrawaddy the nations' sacred identity. For thousands of sacred sites along the banks of Irrawaddy, this river is the most sacred symbol of our nation.

This sacred mother is now open for trade. Big and powerful countries need everything from this nation. For decades, they abused its strategic position for threatening Myanmar. They commodified our girls and women through human trafficking in the northern states of Myanmar. The same sad fate now falls on our Mother Irrawaddy.

The recent events in the country have further, unfortunately increased the leverage of certain countries over our nation. Threats and black mail are used with impunity.

This is the moment of heart-wrenching tragedy.

Myitstone dam is the death sentence to the people of Myanmar. The grim prospect of millions of farmers losing their livelihood, the abuse of sacred sites along the rivers, the death and destruction of the precious flora and fauna of our dear nation, is becoming a nightmarish reality. This dam is an environmental disaster. Myitstone dam is a toxic



cognac for chronic war. Peace will fade in the horizon. A bleak future awaits the people of Myanmar. We do not deserve this.

For the peaceful future, Myitstone dam must be stopped. The former President U Thein Sein took the courageous step of stopping the dam work. We believe all those inside Myanmar will support the move to abrogate any treaty that abuses Mother Irrawaddy. Those who support the restarting Myitstone dam are like sons and daughter who commodify their parents for monetary gains. History will never forgive those who sell our mother Irrawaddy.

On behalf of all the people of Myanmar, especially the poor farmers, we earnestly request all stakeholders to stop their attempts to abuse our mother Irrawaddy. We earnestly request the people of Myanmar to join hands in protecting the dignity of our mother Irrawaddy. We are hopeful that our leaders will resist all efforts to destroy our nation's destiny and dignity.

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