

Biofuel by Decree in Burma

Burma's military is implementing a nation-wide plan to plant eight million acres, an area the size of Belgium, with *Jatropha curcas* for biodiesel production. Two years into the campaign, the people of Burma have suffered forced labor, confiscation of farmlands, and threats to food security. At the same time, testimonies of crop failure and mismanagement expose how the campaign is a fiasco.

- Each state and division in Burma must plant 500,000 acres of jatropha within three years. In Rangoon Division, 20% of all available land will be covered in the toxic tree. Every one of Burma's estimated 54 million people have to plant 177 trees to fulfill planting quotas.
- Since 2006, teachers, students, children, farmers, nurses, civil servants, and prisoners have been forced to plant the tree along roadsides, at school, hospital and religious compounds, and on farmland formerly producing rice.
- Research from 32 townships in each of Burma's states, including 131 interviews, reveals how people have been fined, arrested, and threatened with death for not meeting quotas, damage to plants, or criticism of the campaign.



- Excessive demands for “contributions” of free labor and farm lands have decreased household income and food security. Nearly eight hundred “jatropha refugees” have already fled to Thailand from southern Shan State alone.
- Plantations up to 2,500 acres in size have ignored local climate and soil conditions and been planted haphazardly, resulting in crop failure rates ranging from 25-75%.
- Although the regime has said that people will be able to sell the seeds for income and that the biodiesel will be used in Burma, farmers and local investors have no knowledge of the yield, market, or price of the oil and the regime is actually planning to export the biodiesel for foreign exchange income.

Biofuel by Decree: Unmasking Burma's bio-energy fiasco
by the Ethnic Community Development Forum, can be downloaded at
www.cban.ca/Resources/Topics/Agrofuels