In recent years, the population of Hakha Town, Chin State has faced growing water insecurity. This paper examines the underlying factors that have produced water insecurity. Our research involved two rounds of in-depth interviews and focus groups in Hakha town in May 2015 and June 2016 with state, civil society, and community representatives. We situate our research within the fields of political ecology and peace studies, with a focus on water security.

With a growing population, demand for water is rising. However, water insecurity due to population growth is not the complete picture. Hakha’s water sources have also become less productive due to watershed degradation and deforestation. This has resulted from road construction, agriculture expansion, house construction, and the establishment of two military bases on top of the Rung Mountain. As the town expanded into the watershed, there has been little watershed and urban planning.

At present, Hakha town does not have a municipal water supply. In its absence, the population manage water through a combination of community water groups and small-scale private activities. Whilst broadly meeting basic needs, new migrant arrivals to the town in particular can struggle to access water. The upcoming commissioning of the Timit Dam will certainly help alleviate water shortages, but many questions remain towards the price of water and how it will be allocated.

We argue that the circumstances that precipitate water insecurity in Hakha town have in part emerged from deeper forms of structural violence. Thus, addressing water insecurity should not only be engaged at the level of technical planning, or even water governance, but also from a viewpoint of ensuring justice. We suggest that the transition to a quasi-civilian government, and sub-national governance reform, offers new opportunities for urban and watershed planning to address water insecurity.

**Presenters:**

- Dr. Carl Middleton (Center for Social Development Studies, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University)
- Dr. Naruemon Thabchumpon (Deputy Director, Master of Art in International Development Studies (MAIDS), Chulalongkorn University)
- Van Bawi Lian