

Wa Leader Maha Sang Dies

By Saw Yan Naing

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A leader of the Wa National Army, Maha Sang, formerly of the United Wa State Army, passed away at Nakornping Hospital in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, early morning on Tuesday.

A daughter of Maha Sang told The Irrawaddy on Tuesday that her father died at 12:55 on October 30. He had been suffering from chronic lung disease, she said. Maha Sang was 61 and had been hospitalized since mid-October.

Maha Sang's daughter said his funeral would be held next month at Thakradat Temple in Chiang Mai.

In February 2005, Mae Hong Son Provincial Court in northern Thailand approved arrest warrants for Maha Sang and his brother, Maha Ja, following accusations of involvement in producing and smuggling drugs into Thailand.

Maha Sang was arrested in April, 2005 and was imprisoned in Chiang Mai until he fell ill.

A leader of the Shan State-based Wa National Army, Maha Sang lived in Mae Hong Song for the past 20 years after being pushed out of the inner circle of the opium trade. He previously worked with United Wa State Army commander Wei Hsueh Kang, who was widely suspected of being involved in the drugs trade.

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