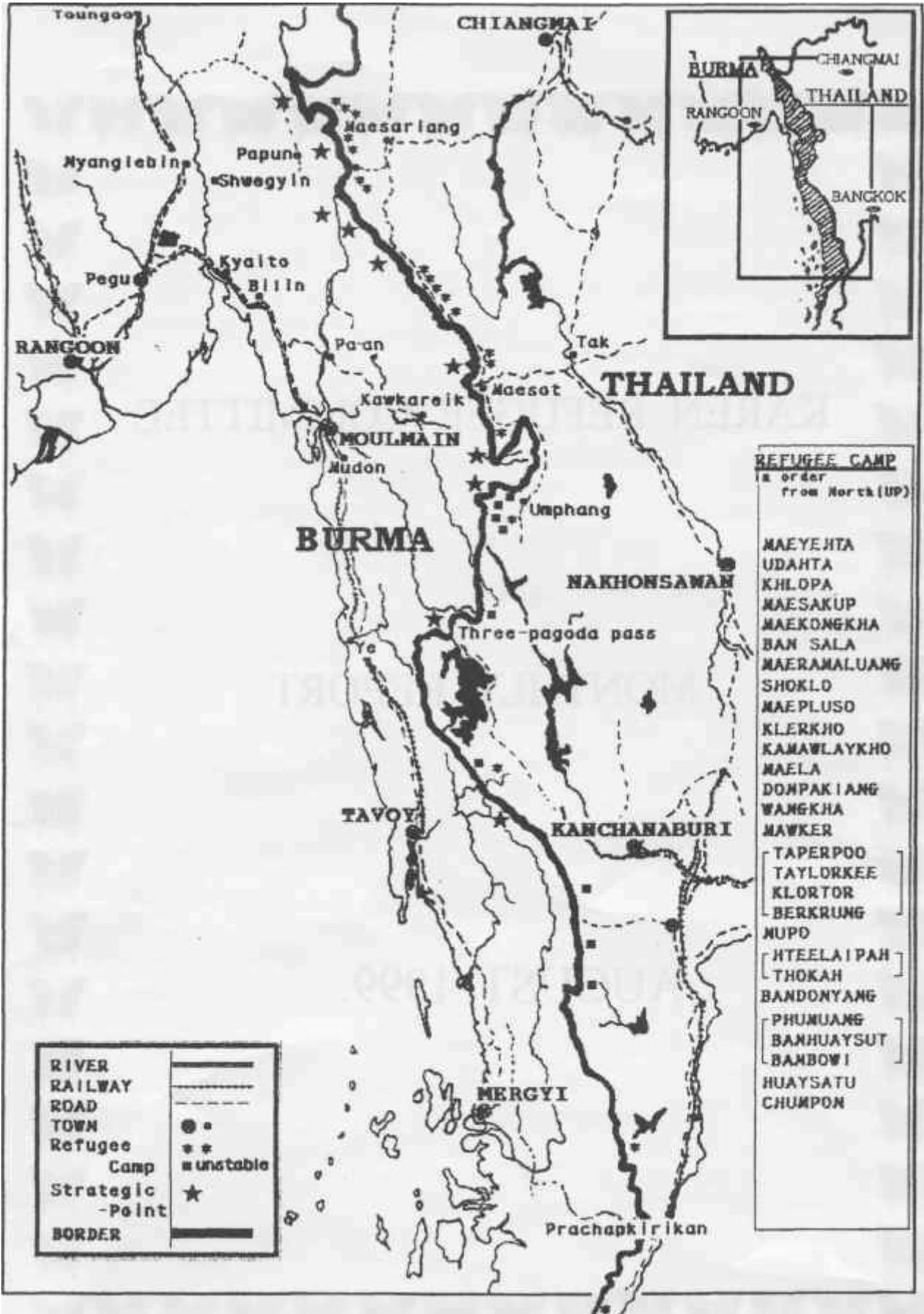


KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

AUGUST, 1999.



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This month, again, is August, the month of Explosions.

Just to remind people - the violent Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in August of AD 79, which buried three Roman cities under fiery ash and lava, and the eruption of Mt. Krakatau in the East Indies in August 1883, which was said to be the most powerful in recent centuries.

This August of 1999 is also witness to the immense destructive power of nature. The quake in western Turkey, with ensuing destruction and deaths, show that man is quite powerless against the onslaught of nature.

Not to be forgotten are the explosions brought on by man. Most unforgettable are the Atomic explosions over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 near the end of World War II August 7th is the anniversary of Embassy explosions in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam. Not a day passed by without hearing of explosions together with destructive storms, Heavy winds and rains, floods, the heat wave, the maze, the global warming with low lying islands disappearing under water.

For us people from Burma, what we shall remember is the 8th day of August 1988, when the explosion of sentiments led to the Military Crackdown, leaving the people and the country deeply wounded and which has as yet to be healed.

Meanwhile this month of August is being designated as the start to move Refugees from Wang Kha and Maw Ker to the new site at UM PHIEM 87-Km. South of Mae Sot. First to be moved is Wang Kha which begins on the 23rd of August. We have no way of objecting to the move other than that the place is subject to strong draughts of wind, heavy showers of rain and severe cold. Our worry is that vulnerable people will be affected by the elements during the move in open vehicles.

But we have more reasons to be optimistic as BBC is supporting with adequate shelter/ building material in addition to support in supplement food and warm clothing MSF is there with facilities for Medical/Health Care, Sanitation and the provision of Water. A school building had already been erected by ICS. Thai Civil and Military Authorities are there for supervision and Security. UNHCR is there to see to our needs and for Protection. What we see is overall concern and understanding for which we feel most gratified.

Meantime, we congratulate Thailand's Athletes for achieving the most "Gold" at the recent SEA Games in Brunei. However we are saddened by the fact that we do not see of our country's Athletes, accomplishing much at the Games especially because Burma was a regional athletic power just a few decades ago. Which indication would mean that athletic dedication and accomplishment is very much affected by the overall deterioration of the country, beginning with the advent of Military Rule, decades ago.

Karen Refugee Committee.
Mae Sot.