CHAPTER 3
Extra-Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions
3.1 Introduction

Reports published throughout 2008 by various local, national and international organizations have collectively shown that extra-judicial, summary and arbitrary executions and killings continued to take place throughout the year and that those responsible include the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) military junta, several of its allied ceasefire groups and agents, as well as armed opposition groups. The vast majority of those cases which were documented throughout 2008 were reported to have occurred within the rural, and mostly ethnic, areas of eastern and western Burma.

“They [SPDC army soldiers] shot everywhere before they entered into the village. If they capture you they will kill you and if they capture me they will kill me. We dare not to stay there, so we fled. They said they will kill everyone that would like to be friends with the KNU [Karen National Union]. We do not want to live under their control, because they force us to do many things for them. We do not have time to work in our farm. We are simple farmers. We farm corn and we sell it. When we get money … we buy rice”.¹

As in previous years, the SPDC, its agents and allied ceasefire armies frequently carried out extra-judicial, summary, and arbitrary killings as a means to intimidate and terrorize an already fearful population by making examples of those who dare to stand against them. Not only are such practices conducted in direct violation of international law, but also Burma's own domestic laws. On 24 May 1989, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) proclaimed the “Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions”, which clearly state that:

“Governments shall prohibit by law all extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions and shall ensure that any such executions are recognized as offences under their criminal laws. Such executions shall not be carried out under any circumstances including, but not limited to, situations of internal armed conflict, excessive or illegal use of force by a public official or other person acting in an official capacity... and situations in which deaths occur in custody. This prohibition shall prevail over decrees issued by governmental authority”.²

Throughout 2008, the SPDC largely worked to consolidate its control over areas secured during previous offensives, with SPDC army units throughout the country, but especially in many of the rural ethnic areas, being primarily engaged in expanding their influence and control over the civilian villagers that live in these areas. (For more information, see Chapter 18: Ethnic Minority Rights).

Military Expansionism

While the SPDC typically denies all responsibility for any extra-judicial, summary and arbitrary executions and killings carried out by its cadres, often blaming such instances on armed opposition groups or labelling them as counter-insurgency measures, it must be remembered that not all of Burma experiences ongoing armed conflict and thus, in these areas, such explanations put forth by the SPDC quickly fall apart. Yet, in spite of this seemingly obvious truth, extra-judicial, summary and arbitrary executions and killings continued to be perpetrated by SPDC army personnel and agents in areas which either experience very low intensity armed conflict or no armed conflict at all. Despite the absence of any armed threat, the SPDC has continued to expand its military force within these areas in much the same way as it has in areas undergoing continuing armed conflict. It is
therefore misleading to use terms such as counter-insurgency to describe the situation in these areas as there is no insurgency. Instead, the primary occupation of the military within these areas is the oppression and control of the civilian population. In fact, the HRDU believes this to be true also of those areas which still endure armed resistance. Over the years, the SPDC has continued to expand its military might and its reach despite the absence of any external threat and in the face of the diminished activities and scope of armed opposition groups.

For example, during 2008, as in previous years, Arakan State continued to endure widespread militarization in spite of the absence of any armed conflict or enemies on the nation’s borders. Rather, the sole occupation of the military is the ongoing repression of the Muslim Rohingya ethnic minority group. Throughout the year, this repression has resulted in numerous cases with the death of the victim at the hands of the SPDC and the NaSaKa (Burma's Border Security Force operating along the Burma-Bangladesh border).

Throughout 2008, SPDC army units also continued to expand military control over new areas of Karen State and reports by the Free Burma Rangers (FBR) have maintained that more than 50 new army camps have been built across the state since 2006.3 The FBR have also alleged that by the end of 2008, there were between 11,000 to 14,000 troops stationed within North Karen State alone, calculating that “this is a 50% troop increase from the very height of the offensive in 2006."4 However, unlike in earlier years, SPDC army soldiers mounted few major offensives through rural Karen State, and instead focussed their attention on road construction and maintenance and ensuring that all SPDC army camps in the region were fully stocked with supplies.5

Similarly, the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) has reported that by year end, there were more than 14 SPDC army battalions permanently stationed within and regularly operating throughout Karenni State and a further ten battalions permanently stationed in Shan State.6 As in Karen State, the SPDC has also increased their road construction activities within the more remote areas of Karenni State to facilitate the more rapid deployment of troops throughout the region and the ease with which they can keep their army camps in the area stocked with supplies and ammunition. These roads, like those in other parts of the country are typically built with the use of forced and uncompensated village labour.7 (For more information, see Chapter 7: Forced Labour and Forced Conscription).

Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that as of December 2008, Chin State was host to no fewer than 50 SPDC army camps manned by an estimated 5,500 to 7,000 soldiers from 14 different battalions.8 This has been shown to be a dramatic increase since 1988 when there were no SPDC army battalions permanently stationed in the area and only two battalions that had operated in the area.9 The HRW report also noted an increase in SPDC army battalions and camps situated in neighbouring states which also have sizeable Chin populations, such as in Kalaymyo Township in Sagaing Division.10 HRW has argued that the rise in SPDC army battalions permanently stationed in Chin State has had a negative impact upon the quality of life for the Chin people, has resulted in an increase in human rights abuses and has significantly decreased the amount and quality of social services available in the area.

Kachin State has also seen a large-scale increase in militarization across the state despite the cessation of hostilities in the region ever since the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) brokered a ceasefire deal with the regime in 1994. If anything, the SPDC has used the ceasefire to rapidly expand and consolidate its influence over the area and the valuable natural resources that Kachin State is home to through the deployment of over 50 battalions in Kachin State alone.
Killings and Violence against Ethnic Minority Villagers

In many of the ethnic areas adjacent to Burma's national borders including, but not limited to, Chin, Karen, Karenni and Shan States, SPDC army units continue to implement a shoot-on-sight policy against the civilian population in those areas who attempt to live beyond the oppressive shadow of military control. This shoot-on-sight policy is a way for the SPDC to consolidate power within these regions and depopulate those areas that the military is unable to sufficiently control or maintain a presence within. For example, on 26 March 2008, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #36 mounted a military assault on the Maw Thay Der IDP hiding site in Toungoo District of northern Karen State. The villagers living at the site were all unarmed and had done nothing wrong aside from attempting to live beyond military control where they could live their lives in peace. 28-year-old Saw Ah Baw Tha was killed in the initial barrage, while all of the other villagers were able to escape.

Often the shoot-on-sight policy implemented by the SPDC is coupled with the liberal deployment of landmines strategically placed in and around abandoned and relocated villages and fields or in areas of the forest that internally displaced persons (IDPs) use for travel or food collection. While the regime claims that these tactics are part of a wider counter-insurgency campaign, it must not be forgotten that civilian villagers are typically the primary intended targets of such attacks, and as such, all such attacks are conducted in direct contravention of the Geneva Conventions. Any civilians ‘caught in the middle’ during such attacks are usually dismissed by the SPDC as collateral damage, often claiming that the villagers had been “hardcore supporters” of the resistance.

These empty 5.56 mm shell cases, photographed in September 2008, were collected by local villagers after SPDC army soldiers had fired upon an internally displaced hiding site in Lu Thaw Township of Karen State on 30 August 2008, reportedly killing two of the villagers in the process. [Photo: © KHRG]

Meanwhile, those villagers living under direct military control in SPDC-controlled villages and forced relocation sites must face a different set of difficulties and dangers. Villagers in SPDC-garrisoned relocation sites live in a system where almost every aspect of their lives is heavily regimented and must abide by a draconian series of rules and restrictions. (For more information, see Chapter 19: Internal Displacement and Forced Relocation). One such restriction imposed upon villagers living in these areas is the severe curtailment of the freedom of movement. Villagers are required to receive official permission, typically at a price, before they are even allowed to leave the village. Those caught outside their village
without proof of having been granted permission to travel can face very harsh punishment indeed. Villagers in this predicament are often fined, beaten, tortured or simply shot-on-sight. The SPDC typically denies all responsibility for such deaths by claiming that anyone caught outside of their villages without proper permission must be either a member of the armed resistance or is helping them and thus subject to the use of lethal force.

Each village living under SPDC control is required to appoint a village head to act as a liaison between the local SPDC army battalions and the community. Almost all of the SPDC’s demands upon a village for forced labour, money or other goods are then issued to the village head, whose responsibility is to see that those demands are met. Whenever demands are not met or when the ‘rules’ imposed by the soldiers are broken, it is typically the village head who is specifically targeted for any transgressions. Village leaders who fail to provide whatever is demanded of them are often subjected to beatings, interrogation, detention, torture and execution by SPDC army soldiers.14 The SPDC and its allied ceasefire armies regularly punish the nearest village leader whenever their units are ambushed by opposition forces. To be a village head is thus not an enviable position and many villages have devised a system whereby the responsibility is shared and rotated between the villagers. Here, an ethnic Chin villager speaks about his father’s experience as a village leader:

“My father didn’t want to be the village council headman but the villagers [on the village council] elected him in 2001. Once elected, it is not possible to refuse. The elected headman has to serve at least one two-year term. The village headman holds a lot of responsibility for the actions of the villagers so it is very common for headmen to have problems with the SPDC. ... My father was afraid to refuse any order of the SPDC. If he refused their order, they would take action against him. When other headmen refused orders from the SPDC, they were killed, beaten, or arrested.”15

In an ongoing effort to create a homogenous Burmese nation, the SPDC actively promotes Theravada Buddhism over all other religions. Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and a handful of other religions are all practiced within Burma, yet all of these groups face persecution and regular harassment by the SPDC and its agents.16 (For more information, see Chapter 12: Freedom of Belief and Religion).

Of all minority groups within Burma, it is perhaps the Muslim Rohingya who face the greatest and most frequent persecution from the military regime. Native to Arakan State, the junta even denies the Rohingya their citizenship, claiming that they instead are from neighbouring Bangladesh; an allegation which Bangladesh rejects. Inasmuch, the Rohingya are effectively stateless.17 Within Arakan State, the Rohingya are confined to selected areas designated for Rohingya settlement and their movement beyond, and even within, these areas is tightly controlled by the SPDC. When caught outside of the areas which have been designated for their settlement, often regardless of whether or not they hold the correct documentation permitting them to travel, many Rohingya are shot on sight while trading, searching for food or moving between villages. Meanwhile, the Rohingya also face additional restrictions simply because of their differing religious beliefs. For example, in one instance which took place on 31 May 2008, two unidentified Rohingya villagers were shot and killed without cause or provocation by NaSaKa personnel in a bamboo forest near the Bangladesh-Burma border. After the shooting the SPDC army soldiers then took the bodies and cremated them; in direct contravention of Muslim burial rites.18

Moreover, the Rohingya are also frequently targeted by NaSaKa personnel in violent crimes and armed robberies. For example, it was reported that on 1 July 2008, NaSaKa personnel broke into a Rohingya home and stabbed residents Mohammed Rezaung and his son, Mohammed Zidis so they could steal an estimated 200,000 kyat worth of jewellery.19 The same article also reported that on 7 July 2008, NaSaKa personnel had also robbed a local
grocery store in Maungdaw and shot the owner, Aung Kyaw. A local villager alleged that, “all of the people knew who the thieves, with Automatic guns were [NaSaKa personnel] and who are having connection [sic] with robbery in the village”. In both of these cases, all of the victims were lucky to survive the attacks, albeit with serious injuries.

On 14 February 2008, 64-year-old General Secretary of the KNU, P’Doh Mahn Sha La Phan, was assassinated in broad daylight in his home in Mae Sot, Thailand. Like many other leaders of the opposition, P’Doh Mahn Sha lived in exile in Thailand where he was afforded a relative level of freedom of movement and personal security.

According to reports, a black four-wheeled-drive had pulled up in front of the house from which two men had exited and walked into the house. The two men were said to have greeted Mahn Sha in S’gaw Karen before drawing their pistols and shooting him twice in the chest and fleeing the scene in the vehicle. The vehicle was later found by Royal Thai Police on the bank of the nearby Moei River which forms the border between Thailand and Burma for part of its length. This fact has lead many commentators (and the police) to automatically assume that the assailants had been from Burma and had fled back across the border; however, the fact that the vehicle had been abandoned at the border does not necessarily mean that the attackers had crossed the border. It was later reported in that the Thai authorities had arrested a group of ten armed Burmese nationals in relation with the incident. It was alleged that the SPDC had sent these men had been sent into Thailand to monitor and possibly execute numerous prominent leaders of various opposition groups based in Thailand. Though there has been much speculation over his death, the motivations for and facts related to Mahn Sha’s death remain unclear. Many of the theories proposed by various commentators have been based upon hearsay and have offered little hard evidence to back them up. However, the one thing that the majority of theories agree upon is that the SPDC or one of its agents or allies was behind the death.

A file photograph of P’Doh Mahn Sha La Phan, the 64-year-old General Secretary of the Karen National Union who was gunned down in his home in Thailand on 14 February 2008.

[Photo: Yuzo/ The Irrawaddy]
Killings and Violence during Forced Labour

Forced labour is arguably the most pervasive human rights abuse in Burma today. The SPDC, its allied ceasefire groups and armed opposition groups alike have all been guilty of using forced labour. In May 1999, in response to persistent pressure from the International Labour Organization (ILO) regarding the use of forced labour in Burma, the SPDC issued Order #1/99, effectively banning the practice and since that time has made repeated assertions that the use of forced labour has been ceased. However, despite these claims, the use of forced labour has continued unabated, in direct contravention to the ILO Convention #29 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour, which Burma has been a State Party to since 1955. (For more information, see Chapter 7: Forced Labour and Forced Conscription).

Villagers and townsfolk across the country are subjected to forced labour in all its many forms. However, it is in the country’s ethnic areas where forced labour is practiced at its greatest severity. Villagers living in these areas are ordered to perform forced and uncompensated labour for the military at an alarming frequency and are often forced to cope with numerous overlapping demands for forced labour issued by the SPDC, ceasefire groups and occasionally also resistance forces. Villagers are used as forced labour by armed groups on money-making schemes, infrastructure projects and in direct support of military operations as messengers, porters, guides, and human shields and minesweepers.

The use of forced labour, regardless of which group is imposing it, exposes those forced to endure it to a wide range of other related human rights violations. Not only does it take villagers, many of whom are subsistence farmers, away from their livelihoods, but is also subjects those same villagers to extortion carried out under the rubric of payment for those performing labour. (For more information, see Chapter 8: Deprivation of Livelihood). Moreover, villagers performing forced labour are also exposed to the threat of antipersonnel landmines which litter many ethnic regions and are often beaten, tortured and killed for failure to comply or for inability to continue.

Demands for forced labour are often accompanied by some sort of threat against the safety of village leaders or even entire communities. While these threats are sometimes spoken, they are typically implicit in the demand that the community will be punished should it fail to perform its ‘duty’. Such punishments can be the forced relocation of the entire village, or the torture or death of its leaders.

In areas experiencing ongoing armed conflict, portering of supplies for the military is rife. Villagers are often ordered to carry loads of food, water, cooking supplies, firewood, ammunition and other military materiel on their backs. SPDC army units frequently forcibly recruit civilian villagers as porters in addition to exploiting convicts from Burma’s prisons for this purpose. Many of the areas through which these porters are required to carry their loads area heavily contaminated with landmines and instances of porters losing their lives and/or limbs to mines are commonplace. For instance, on 2 November 2008, two unnamed Karen villagers from Blah Toh village in Dooplaya District, Karen State who had been forcibly conscripted as porters by a combined SPDC and Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) during an assault on a nearby Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA; armed wing of the Karen National Union) base were injured in a landmine blast. One of the men died immediately, while the other was seriously wounded and left for dead by the soldiers. He was later found by KNLA soldiers who sent him to a hospital in Thailand for treatment. SPDC army units often force their porters to walk in front of the soldiers as human minesweepers in areas known to be contaminated by landmines. In such cases, the porters are forced to walk ahead of the soldiers to detonate any mines which may be planted along the trail while the soldiers follow at a safe distance behind. According to Amnesty
International (AI), a civilian female villager from Tantabin Township of Toungoo District in Northern Karen State recounted that, “she and other porters were forced to act as minesweepers and that some had stepped on mines”. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines and Other Explosive Devices).

Similarly, porters are often used as human shields by SPDC army units to discourage ambushes by armed resistance groups. Sadly though, this tactic does not always work, and civilian villagers are often caught in the crossfire and killed.

In addition to those killings which come about as a result of armed conflict, many forced labourers are killed for failure to comply with forced labour demands or for their inability to continue. Weakened by harsh treatment, overwork, lack of food and sleep, and the absence of medical care, many porters simply collapse under the heavy loads that they have been given to carry. Whenever this happens, the porter is typically verbally abused, kicked and beaten, sometimes to the point of death. For example, on 26 July 2008, 38-year-old Hsang Sai from Shan State was kicked to death by SPDC army soldiers after his chronic hernia kept him from further carrying his required load. Incidents such as this have been widely documented over the years and continued to be carried out with impunity during 2008.

Convict porters face particularly cruel behaviour at the hands of their SPDC captors. It has been well documented that convict porters are subjected to significantly worse treatment than their civilian villager counterparts. Convict porters are typically held in far worse conditions, are subjected to more frequent and severe beatings, and are given little food and no medical treatment. Those who fall ill are shown no respite, while those who collapse from exhaustion or sickness are either beaten to death or simply left to die where they lie. Those who attempt escape are killed in front of the others as an example. Put plainly, convict porters are used by the SPDC, and used harshly, until they are of no more use to the soldiers at which point they are discarded.

This photograph, taken in August 2008, depicts the right hand of a civilian Karen villager from Toungoo District of Karen State who had been shot by SPDC army soldiers on an earlier (though unspecified) date. [Photo: © KHRG]
Killings and Violence by Non-State Actors

Burma has been host to numerous armed insurgencies for the past 60 years; some of which developed soon after gaining independence from Britain in 1948. Several of these insurgencies continue to this day. However, the long years of fighting a much larger and better equipped force has taken its toll on many resistance groups. While some groups have been outright defeated, others have been weakened or marginalised, leading a number of them to seek ceasefire arrangements with the regime. Meanwhile, others have suffered from factionalization and have split, with one faction reaching a ceasefire agreement with the regime, while the other continues to fight. The SPDC has long used such divisions to its advantage and has repeatedly used such differences of opinion to create deeper divides within ethnic regions among certain groups. As a result, many ceasefire groups now work directly with the SPDC, often fighting alongside them against their former comrades. (For more information, see Chapter 18: Ethnic Minority Rights).

It must be noted here that NSAs operating in Burma are also guilty of committing human rights abuses, including, but not limited to, extra-judicial, summary and arbitrary executions. This is true both of those groups allied with the SPDC as well as those who continue to oppose it. In addition to fulfilling demands issued by SPDC army units, villagers are also similarly pressured by ceasefire groups and insurgent groups with demands for food, supplies, money, labour and recruits. In many areas, demands for support are regular occurrences and, as with the SPDC, serious consequences can follow when village leaders are unable to supply that which is demanded. Meanwhile, SPDC army units typically display an extremely low tolerance towards villagers suspected of having provided support to insurgents regardless of whether it was done willing or otherwise. It is not rare for encounters between SPDC army soldiers (and certain ceasefire groups) and those whom they suspect to have aiding resistance forces to result in extra-judicial killings.

A Chin refugee from Matupi Township articulated the ‘catch-22’ situation that many villagers and village leaders face as follows: “[The Chin people] are sandwiched by both sides. If the village does not pay up they will be harassed by the CNF [Chin National Front]. If they pay and the army finds out, they will be imprisoned and even killed.”

However, it must also be noted that while resistance groups are guilty of issuing such demands and of committing grave human rights violations, the frequency with which they are perpetrated is typically far lower than it is for the SPDC and its allied ceasefire groups.

Meanwhile, many ceasefire groups allied with the SPDC soon become equally abusive of the villagers that they claim to represent and employ beatings, torture and killings on a regular basis. In some cases, villagers have claimed that certain ceasefire groups are worse than the SPDC. For example, on 20 November 2008, two civilian villagers from Dooplaya District, Karen State were brutally stabbed to death by DKBA soldiers after they had been accused of using “black magic.”
Killings and Violence in Urban Areas

While most of the killings reported throughout the *Burma Human Rights Yearbook* typically take place in Burma’s rural areas, particularly those areas which experience ongoing armed conflict, a significant number of deaths were also reported to have occurred within Burma’s urban centres during 2008.

In September 2007, urban violence in Burma reached a ten-year high during the bloody crackdown on the “Saffron Revolution”. The SPDC’s unilateral use of violence against Buddhist monks and unarmed civilian protesters in the September 2007 protests brought many tactics that the SPDC frequently employs in the rural areas into the eyes of the world’s media when scenes of riot police and military personnel fired into crowds with live ammunition. Responding to widespread international condemnation for the heavy-handed violence used by the SPDC, Police Chief Khin Yi was quoted saying that only 15 persons had been killed during the crackdowns.32 However, this figure was widely dismissed as being little more than an attempt to conceal the true number of those who had lost their lives. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in Burma, reported of having uncovered evidence of twice this number of deaths in Rangoon alone. Meanwhile, some reports (including one published by the HRDU in March 2008) maintained that the death toll could indeed be as high as 100.33 Some other commentators however, argued that the number of dead could in fact be much higher. Ashin Gawthita, a Buddhist monk who was violently beaten by security forces during the protests in Rangoon, told the *Mizzima News* that: “they fired at the peaceful demonstrators indiscriminately. Some died on the spot and some died in hospitals. So the total death toll may touch 250 to 300”.34

In addition to inaccurate reports on deaths throughout the Saffron Revolution, the whereabouts of many protesters continued to remain in question long after the protests had been crushed. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma (AAPPB) has alleged that several hundred protestors who had been arrested by security personnel during the demonstrations still remained unaccounted for at the time of publication, approximately two years after the protests and their suppression had taken place. Many protesters have simply disappeared never to be seen nor heard from again, while a number of others managed to flee and went into hiding after the crackdown.

A number of those who had gone into hiding in an attempt to evade being punished for their involvement in the protests were later found by the authorities, some of whom were killed. On an unspecified date in early 2008, Maung Ba Tin, 30, and Maung Saw Han, 42, who had both lead villagers during the protests in Kyauk Pyu Township of Arakan State were discovered, tortured and killed by local police after having gone into hiding. The bodies of the two men were found in the forest on the outskirts of Myo Chaung village of Kyauk Pyu Township. A friend of both of the victims reported the incident to the *Narinjara News* only after he was able to flee the country: “The incident was known by everybody in the area and they [SPDC] had to kill them six months after the Saffron Revolution. They were hiding in the jungle after the Saffron Revolution due to fear of arrest by authorities.”35 (For more information on the Saffron Revolution protests, see the HRDU report: *Bullets in the Alms Bowl; An analysis of the brutal SPDC suppression of the Saffron Revolution*, as well as Chapter 11 of the *Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2007*: “The Saffron Revolution – The 2007 pro-democracy movement”).

The months of May and June 2008 also saw a sharp increase in the levels of violence being used in urban centres such as Rangoon in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Nargis. According to reports by the local media, low-income areas such as Hlaingtharyar Township in Rangoon Division were not only among some of the neighbourhoods that were hardest hit.
by the cyclone, but they also had to deal with the influx of a large number of individuals recently displaced by the devastation of the cyclone.

As a result of the almost complete lack of assistance from the junta and the restrictions imposed on the provision of international aid, violent armed robberies became increasingly common in Hlaingtharyar Township, some of which resulted in the death of the victim. It was reported that by September 2008, Rangoon police believed that there was an “average of one serious crime per day in the western suburb [Hlaingtharyar Township].” The area also saw a large influx of the recently homeless and displaced villagers from the Irrawaddy Delta move in to the township, many of whom travelled with everything that they had left. It has been proposed that the movement of large numbers of rural migrants into Hlaingtharyar Township, coupled with the desperate living conditions in the area made the new migrants easy targets for robbery, theft and the occasional killing. Their lack of experience living in a large city might have also contributed to why they were more often the targets of the increased violence after Cyclone Nargis. (For more information, see Chapter 10: Cyclone Nargis – From natural disaster to human catastrophe).

This 45-year-old Karen villager from Tantabin Township in Toungoo District, Karen State was shot on-sight by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #56 as he was harvesting his paddy field. The bullet passed through his right leg, yet despite his obvious injury, the soldiers ordered him to accompany them as they continued their patrol, presumably so that he could serve as a porter, guide, human shield, human minesweeper, or all of the above. He was later released the following day at which point he was able to seek medical attention. This photograph was taken on 7 November 2008 as he was recovering. [Photo: © KHRG]
3.2 Extra-Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions - Partial list of incidents for 2008

Arakan State

At approximately 8:00 pm on 2 February 2008, the body of Ko Nyan Win, an SPDC army soldier, was found stabbed to death on the road in the Nga Kyiduck village in the Buthidaung Township. A second soldier, Tun Myint, was also reported missing. Both men were from Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #564 and had been in the village “looking for taro” to feed the livestock in the battalion’s husbandry project when the attack occurred. A local villager claimed to have seen the two soldiers drinking at a house in the nearby village of Pyint Chay shortly before the incident occurred. Many villagers from Pyint Chay were detained and interrogated in relation to the incident; however at the time of publication it remained unknown who had committed the murder.38

On 6 February 2008, four bodies of Burmese Muslims were found floating in the Naff River; the natural border between Bangladesh and Burma. The body of a teenage girl was found on the Bangladeshi bank while three more bodies were found by NaSaKa personnel on the Burmese side of the river. It was believed that the four victims had drowned following the recent sinking of a boat making the crossing between Burma and Bangladesh.39

On 20 February 2008, 50-year-old Mohammad Nura from Mae Zin village in Maungdaw Township was killed after being stepped on by a wild elephant. He was taken to an unnamed hospital for treatment, but later died as a result of his injuries. His wife was forced to pay 20,000 kyat for the treatment that he had received in addition to a further 50,000 kyat for his cremation. While it was not explicitly stated in the original report, the HRDU believes that Mohammad Nura was a Muslim and that his cremation was conducted by the authorities in direct contravention of his religious beliefs. Mohammad Nura’s wife was obliged to sell the family farm to raise enough money to meet these costs.40

On 25 February 2008, 3-year-old Mohammad Armin accidentally drowned in his father’s prawn farm. The body was taken away by local police who demanded 50,000 kyat and 12 bags of cement before they would return the body to the family for burial.41

On 1 March 2008, NaSaKa personnel shot and killed an unnamed cattle trader near Aley Than Kyaw village in Maungdaw Township as he was transporting his cattle to Bangladesh by boat. The victim and the crew of ten were reportedly carrying the cattle from Sittwe to Shapuri Dip when the NaSaKa attempted to stop the boat. Even though he was in possession of all of the appropriate documents and permission from the authorities, he was frightened to stop and attempted to speed away. The NaSaKa opened fire on the boat, killing the cattle trader instantly. The boat and its cargo of cattle were then reportedly confiscated by the NaSaKa and a number of the crewmembers were detained. At the time of publication the crewmembers were still being detained in a NaSaKa camp. (For more information, see Chapter 8: Deprivation of Livelihood).42

On 20 April 2008, 26-year-old Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) member, Ko Maung Maung was stabbed to death by 18-year-old Ko Kyaw Win at the inland water transportation jetty in Sittwe. According to reports, Ko Maung Maung, who was responsible for supervising the transportation of goods out of the port city along the water ways, was stabbed by Ko Kyaw Win after attempting to extort additional levies for transporting his goods.43
On 23 April 2008, the Narinjara News reported that two local leaders who had lead villagers during the Saffron Revolution protests of September 2007, were tortured and killed by authorities from Myo Chaung village in Kyauk Pyu Township. The bodies of the two leaders, 30-year-old Maung Ba Tin and 42-year-old Maung Saw Han, were found in the forest where they had been attempting to evade arrest for their prominent roles in the protests. The two men were believed to have been tortured and killed by Police Sergeant Tin Win Shwe from the Myo Chaung Police Station. The family members of the victims were unable to file a report with police in a neighbouring village as local police had prohibited them from leaving their village.44

On the morning of 31 May 2008, two unnamed Rohingya villagers were shot and killed by an unidentified SPDC army unit who opened fire on their group as they were cutting bamboo in the forest. The two bodies were later found near border marker #50 by SPDC army soldiers (unstated in the original report, but presumably from a different unit) from the Bandohla SPDC army camp. The bodies were cremated at the army camp rather than being returned to the village for burial in accordance with Islamic burial rites. The other members of the group who had been cutting bamboo all managed to escape without injury.45

On 28 June 2008, police from the No.1 Police Station in Sittwe shot and killed 33-year-old businessman Khadir Hussain from Nazir Para village. His companion, 29-year-old Abdul Goffar was also shot, but escaped with his life. The men had permission to export goods to Bangladesh by boat, although, when the police approached their boat, the men jumped into the river out of fear. The police, suspecting the two men to be smugglers, immediately opened fire. Khadir Hussain was buried, while his companion was sent to Sittwe Hospital for treatment.46

At approximately 8:00 am on 21 July 2008, two SPDC army soldiers from LIB #538 were shot and killed during an ambush by an Arakan Liberation Army (ALA) unit lead by Khine Linn. The ALA is the armed wing of the opposition Arakan Liberation Party (ALP). The ALP claimed not to have sustained any causalities on their side during the ambush.47

At approximately 9:00 pm on 25 August 2008, Lieutenant Saw Myo Htun, from Riot Police Battalion #12, stationed in the Lawka Nandar Pagoda compound in Sittwe, was killed after a fight had broken out with approximately 30 local youths. Sergeant Zayar Thaw and one other unnamed sergeant attached to the battalion were also injured during the clash. According to sources, the fight occurred when the three soldiers drunkenly entered the neighbourhood shouting profanities and harassing the residents. The SPDC later dispatched additional riot police to the area to arrest the youths. However, being unable to apprehend the youths involved, they instead arrested their relatives in lieu of the youths. After hearing this, many of the youths later turned themselves in to the local police, but in spite of this, many of their family members still remained in custody.48

On 3 September 2008, 39-year-old Abdu Suban and his brother, 21-year-old Sadek Osman were killed at a shrimp farm in Rathedaung Township. Noor Sobi, 40, and his family members were arrested the following day in the absence of any evidence which proved their guilt, but simply because they had an old feud with the two brothers. Other villagers reported that they were frightened of more arbitrary arrests occurring in relation to the incident.49

At approximately 4:30 pm on 17 September 2008, 38-year-old Azooma Khaun and her 7-year-old son were run over by a military vehicle, referred to as a C/279, from the Sittwe military cantonment while walking alongside the road near Kathey village of Sittwe. The boy died on the way to the hospital where the mother was reported to be in critical condition.50
On 28 September 2008, Iqubal Hussain was found dead in his residence in Hindaung village of Buthidaung Township. Local villagers suspect that he had been murdered by SPDC army soldiers who had been seen loitering outside his home on the day that he was killed. His family and other local villagers had stated that earlier in the week, Iqubal Hussain had caught two SPDC army soldiers who had attempted to rob him late at night and turned them over to the Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC). (For more information, see Chapter 8: Deprivation of Livelihood).51

On 5 October 2008, NaSaKa personnel stationed along the Naff River killed 40-year-old cattle trader Mostaque Ahmed after he and seven other traders had crossed back into Burma from Bangladesh in their rowboat. Although, Mostaque Ahmed had secured permission to trade in Bangladesh legally, the NaSaKa officials arrested all eight men and took them to the NaSaKa camp. There, Mostaque Ahmed attempted to escape by jumping into the river. He was recaptured and beaten unconscious by NaSaKa personnel who left his body in the river where he drowned. His body was found two days later on 7 October 2008.52

On the evening of 17 November 2008, a group of approximately ten unidentified armed assailants shot and killed three villagers and injured another in Thansi Upazila in Bandarban District of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh. Local villagers alleged that the ALA was responsible and that the killings had been carried out in revenge. On 24 June 2007, ALA soldiers allegedly abducted Shahid Sumon, an NGO official from nearby Thansi Kaobori village. On 9 July 2007, soldiers from the Bangladeshi Rifles (BDR) successfully rescued Shahid Sumon with the cooperation of local villagers. In apparent retaliation, on 14 December 2007, ALA soldiers then killed six villagers from Mra Wa village, including a family of four, stating that they would kill all villagers who opposed them. The names of the four victims are as follows:

1. Rwe Nong Mro, 35, village head from Mra Wa village, killed;
2. Chong Doi Mro, 50, from Mra Wa village, killed;
3. Pan Tun Aung, 46, village head from Modok Bazar village, killed;
4. Meha Chin, 24, a relative of Pan Tung Aung, wounded.53

At approximately 12:00 am on 23 November 2008, 45-year-old Daw Aung Tha May was stabbed to death while standing guard over a plantation of teak saplings for the NaSaKa near Way Thali village, Maungdaw Township. The authorities believed the suspects to be villagers from nearby Nyaung Chaung (Khadir) village who may have killed her as they were attempting to steal the teak saplings. No evidence has been found to support this claim, despite many villagers from Nyaung Chaung having been interrogated. No suspects were charged with the murder.54

At approximately 4:00 pm on 24 November 2008, the body of 20-year-old Abu Tayab was found in a forest near Senari Mru Para village of NaSaKa Area #2 after allegedly being killed by his neighbour, Noor Mohamed. Three days prior to the incident, a fight had erupted between the two after some of Abu Tayab’s chickens had destroyed part of Noor Mohamed’s vegetable plot. Noor Mohamed refused to return the chickens, keeping them as compensation for his destroyed crops. Abu Tayab brought the case to the NaSaKa officials, where Noor Mohamed was summoned and subsequently beaten by NaSaKa personnel for not returning the livestock. According to the original source, following this, on 22 November 2008, Noor Mohamed abducted Abyu Tayab and killed him near Senari Mru Para. Noor Mohamed then fled the village and no further information has since been presented as to his whereabouts or even if he was captured.55

On 2 December 2008, 32-year-old Abdu Khader was killed near Maungdaw. NaSaKa personnel believed that local villagers had killed him because he was an informer for the SPDC and the NaSaKa. No one was arrested in connection to the incident.56
On 20 December 2008, 20-year-old Dil Dar Alam was beaten to death by five other villagers during an argument that ensued over betelnut leaves in Maungdaw Township. According to reports, Shamshu Alam, 35, started the dispute by accusing Hamid Hussain, 25, of stealing betelnut leaves from his yard. Dil Dar Alam attempted to intervene to settle the argument, but was beaten by Shamshu Alam and his unnamed associates who believed that he was secretly helping Hamid Hussain. Dil Dar Alam later died on the way to the hospital as a result of his injuries. Since the incident, all five villagers involved fled the village.57

Saw Bo La Gyi (top), a 53-year-old internally displaced Karen villager from Yaw Kee village in Mone Township in the Nyaunglebin District was shot in the chest and killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #704 on 1 January 2008. 32-year-old Saw Bo Wa (bottom) was also injured in the attack, but was lucky to have escaped with his life. For more information, see the incident below listed under Karen State and dated 1 January 2008. [Photos: © FBR]
Chin State

At approximately 10:30 pm on 11 September 2008, 19-year-old Mahn Bhu Khee was stabbed to death by a mob of 20 assailants armed with sticks and knives as he was returning from a fair at the Thone Su Pagoda in Kanpetlet Township. Local residents alleged that members of the SPDC-affiliated paramilitary force, the Swan Arr Shin (‘Masters of Physical Force’) were responsible for the attack. Local residents told the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) that three days prior, members of the Swan Arr Shin had been instructed by local police to employ a three-step staged process in dealing with anyone commemorating the one year anniversary of the Saffron Revolution protests: “first to try to negotiate with them, then to shoot at their legs and finally to shoot to kill”. Residents also stated that an attack by any other group would have been difficult due to the heightened security presence during that time period. Local authorities stated that 15 persons had been arrested in connection with the incident, but at the time of publication their fate was unknown.

On 23 September 2008, an unnamed SPDC army soldier from LIB #228 was killed near Lailet village on the Burma-Indian border in Falam Township. The soldier’s body was found on a forest trail frequently used by black market traders and smugglers trafficking goods between the two countries. SPDC army soldiers based in the area are known to commonly wait by the border to extort money from traders. The SPDC took a local Lailet villager into custody, suspecting the unnamed individual of having been responsible for the killing. The fate of the villager is unknown as no further reports about the incident have emerged.

Irrawaddy Division

In March 2008, the United States’ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor reported that on the night of 10 January 2007, Maung Chan Kun from Pantanaw Township was arrested in his home by Deputy Police Superintendent Soe Moe. Maung Chan Kun was charged with escaping from an army labour camp in Thaton, in Mon State; a charge that his wife denied. Maung Chan Kun’s wife, whose name was not given, was later informed that her husband was no longer in custody, but in the local hospital, whereupon arrival she learned of his death. According to the initial report, numerous injuries to his head and shoulders were clearly visible on his body, strongly suggesting that he had been beaten to death.

On 25 May 2008, SPDC army soldiers from Light Infantry Division (LID) #66 reportedly killed two unnamed villagers in Thit Pote village, Labutta Township for no known motive. No further information on the killings was given.

On 26 May 2008, according to the Free Burma Rangers (FBR), unidentified SPDC army soldiers killed one unnamed villager in Yaytwinchaung village. No further details of the incident have been made public.

Kachin State

At approximately 9:00 pm on 7 June 2008, an unnamed SPDC army soldier shot three of his superiors, killing two corporals and seriously injuring a sergeant, at the Myitsone Dam Project, approximately 28 kilometres (17 miles) north of Myitkyina. While the original report maintained that the reason behind the shootings remained unknown, it is quite likely that the incident arose from mistreatment of the soldier by the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs). Such harassment and mistreatment is commonplace. The soldier reportedly fled the unit following the shooting and local villagers received orders from the battalion to find him. It is not known which battalion he was attached to.
On 27 July 2008, 15-year-old Nhkum Hkawn Din was gang-raped, tortured, killed and mutilated by SPDC army soldiers near Nam Sai Village, Bhamo Township. Hkawn Din was attacked and killed while bringing food to her brother working on the family’s farm. Family members have affirmed that she had been tortured and mutilated beyond recognition: her eyes had been gouged out, “her skull was crushed beyond recognition”, she had been stabbed in several places on her body including her stomach and chest, her throat was slashed, and she had been “further violated with knives”. A local witness confirmed seeing a group of SPDC army soldiers follow Hkawn Din to the farm, and other witnesses have reported seeing soldiers leave the area after the time of her disappearance. Locals and family members claim that soldiers attached to LIB #437 were responsible for the attack, although no arrests or action has yet been taken by the authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice.64

At approximately 4:00 pm on 13 September 2008, two unnamed Kachin women were killed when they were run over by a speeding SPDC army truck near Myitkyina University. One of the women was killed instantly while the other died soon after on the way to hospital. Local residents have claimed that the second woman may have survived if the SPDC army soldiers had taken her immediately to hospital rather than taking photographs of the scene.65

On 15 December 2008, an unnamed villager from Kone Ting village in Mansi Township was shot and killed in a logging dispute between Kone Ting villagers and thieves alleged to have affiliations with an unidentified Chinese logging firm.66

Karen State

On 1 January 2008, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #704 operating under Military Operations Command (MOC) #4 opened fire upon a group of internally displaced villagers from Yaw Kee village, Mone Township, as they attempted to flee from the advancing SPDC army patrol. According to the FBR, a number of villagers were shot in the attack, including 53-year-old Saw Bo La Gyi who was shot in the chest and killed. Another villager, identified as 32-year-old Saw Bo Wa, was shot in the leg but managed to escape with his life. The two previous photographs of Saw Bo La Gyi and Saw Bo Wa were both taken shortly after the incident.67

On 5 January 2008, the FBR reported that at approximately 8:00 am on 9 October 2007, Naw Mu Mu, 16, and Naw Say Htoo, 53, were shot and seriously wounded in attacks that SPDC army soldiers operating under Lid #11 mounted on civilian villages in Shwegyin Township of Nyaunglebin District. The two women, along with three other members of their family, were working in their fields when the SPDC army soldiers appeared. Fearing for their safety, the group fled, prompting the soldiers to open fire. Naw Mu Mu was shot in the right arm in the initial volley of gunfire, but fell and dislocated her kneecap. She survived by crawling under some bushes where she was able to hide from the soldiers. Meanwhile, Naw Say Htoo was shot in the leg and propelled down the mountainside into an adjacent field. Both women remained immobile in the fields for a whole day until they were eventually found by KNLA soldiers and an FBR medic. Both women were then transported in a make-shift stretcher to a nearby clinic run by the KNU.68

On 30 January 2008, Major Leh Moo of the SPDC-allied Karen National Union / Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council (KNU/KNLA PC) was killed in a bomb attack while sleeping at his home near the KNU/KNLA PC headquarters. Leh Moo was the son-in-law of KNU/KNLA PC Commander Brigadier General Htain Maung. Some sources have alleged that Leh Moo was killed due to his involvement in illegal logging operations in the Pa’an Township, while others have maintained that it was a targeted assassination. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines and Other Explosive Devices).69
On 16 January 2008, the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) reported that on 9 December 2007, SPDC army soldiers from LID #22 shot 35-year-old “Saw K---” (name censored in the original report) from Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District. According to the report, “Saw K---” had been detained and interrogated by the soldiers regarding his alleged contact with the Karen National Union (KNU). As the soldiers transferred him to meet with their column commander, “Saw K---” escaped but was shot in the thigh in the process.70

On 28 January 2008, 23-year-old Saw Day Kreh Mu from Thay Nwey Kee village was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers operating under MOC #21 in the Muthey area of Nyaunglebin District. An unnamed companion who was with him at the time managed to escape with his life. The two men had been walking in the forest close to P’Na Mo Keh village when they were seen and fired upon by the SPDC unit. Villagers in this area are commonly subjected to a shoot on site policy whenever they are encountered by SPDC army soldiers away from their villages in the forest. (For more information, see Chapter 19: Internal Displacement and Forced Relocation).71

On 25 March 2008, the FBR reported that on 25 December 2007, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #401 (Tho Tho Twin commanding), operating under MOC #8, tortured and killed two Karen villagers from Tee Law Bler village as they were tending to their rice field in Dooplaya District. The two victims, identified as 13-year-old Saw Dee Klee and 25-year-old Saw No Maw, were reportedly tortured, beaten to death and mutilated before being burned. According to the report, the Achilles Tendons of both feet and the throats of both victims had been slashed. Saw No Maw had also been disembowelled, but it remains unclear if this was done before or after his death. On 19 April 2008, the FBR later reported the terrible truth that 13-year-old Saw Dee Klee was also known by the name Saw Wilbur Htoo, who at age eight had survived the 28 April 2002 Tee Law Bler massacre in which ten unarmed civilian villagers were killed and a further nine were wounded as they slept in a field hut. The photograph reproduced below depicts the burned remains of Saw No Maw as he was found by his uncle, while the brief photo essay dedicated to Saw Dee Klee (aka Saw Wilbur Htoo) reproduced over the following pages provides further information on the Tee Law Bler massacre and the tragic fate of Saw Dee Klee.72

The charred remains of 25-year-old Saw No Maw from Tee Law Bler village in Dooplaya District of Karen State. Saw No Maw was tortured, mutilated and beaten to death alongside his 13-year-old cousin, Saw Dee Klee (aka Saw Wilbur Htoo) on 25 December 2007. For more information, see the preceding incident as well as the brief photo essay dedicated to Saw Dee Klee reproduced on the following pages. [Photo: © FBR]
In April 2002, a group of villagers from Tee Law Bler village in Dooplaya District, Karen State attempted to flee to Thailand after having received orders to relocate. On the night of 28 April, the group rested in a group of field huts _en route_ to the Burma-Thai border where they were discovered by SPDC army soldiers from IB #78. The soldiers surrounded the huts and opened fire, killing ten and wounded nine more. Six of those killed were children, four of which were under the age of ten (top). Saw Dee Klee (middle and bottom), aged eight at the time, was struck in the left arm and survived only by hiding under the dead body of his grandmother. Saw Dee Klee’s mother, Naw Pee Lee, 45, who was eight month’s pregnant at the time, was shot in the left breast and died while hiding in the forest 12 days later. The survivors managed to make it across the border to Nu Po refugee camp in Thailand where they were able to receive treatment.
Almost six years after the Tee Law Bler massacre, Saw Dee Klee had returned to Burma with what remained of his family to attempt to rebuild their lives that they had lost. On 25 December 2007, Saw Dee Klee’s father, Saw Ko Nu (top), was fishing near his fields while his son, Saw Dee Klee, and nephew, Saw No Maw, were nearby tending to their hill field. An SPDC army patrol of soldiers from LIB #401 saw Saw Ko Nu by the river and opened fire. Similar to what happened six years earlier, Saw Ko Nu was able to escape unscathed. Saw Dee Klee and Saw No Maw, however, were not so fortunate. When Saw Ko Nu returned he discovered the mutilated and charred bodies of his son (bottom) and nephew in the burned rice field that they had just been working in. Both victims had been tortured and beaten to death. The Achilles Tendons on the ankles of both victims had been cut and their throats had been slashed open. Saw No Maw had been disembowelled and both bodies were partially burned. It remains unknown if the bodies had been mutilated prior to death or after it.

As a direct result of SPDC oppression and their senseless attacks on civilian villages, Saw Ko Nu has lost almost everything that he once had. He now lives to raise his one surviving child after having lost his wife and unborn child and two of his children in the Tee Law Bler massacre in April 2002, and more recently, his son, Saw Dee Klee almost six years later to similar circumstances.

This tragic tale of loss has been reproduced here as a reminder of the sheer magnitude of the pain and suffering which must be endured by the ordinary people of Burma who simply wish to be left alone in peace and whose only crime is to try to live free from oppression. [Photos: Opposite page: top © CIDKP, middle © KHRG, bottom © FBR; This page: all © FBR]
On 26 March 2008, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #36, operating under MOC #10, shot and killed 28-year-old Saw Ah Baw Tha in the IDP hiding site at Maw Thay Der in Toungoo District. All of the other IDPs living at Maw Thay Der were able to escape. (For more information, see Chapter 19: Internal Displacement and Forced Relocation).73

On 1 April 2008, 45-year-old Saw Gka Rer Bper was killed by unidentified SPDC army soldiers near Huh Muh Der village in Toungoo District.74

On 8 April 2008, 35-year-old Saw Kru Kra, a Karen villager from the Kler Lah forced relocation site in Toungoo District was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers attached to MOC #10. According to reports, his body was found by fellow villagers in a valley not far from the relocation site.75

On 3 May 2008, Naw Baw Oo, 26, from Maw Bwe Ko village, Toungoo District, stepped on a landmine in Sho Ko village after it had been planted there by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #364 in an attempt dissuade villagers from returning to the village. The original report failed to elaborate on Naw Baw Oo’s injuries or even state if she had survived the blast or not. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines and Other Explosive Devices).76

On 11 May 2008, SPDC army soldiers from MOC #10 reportedly fired on the Ko Haw Der and Thay Mu Der villages in Toungoo District with mortars. It is unknown if anyone was killed or injured in the barrage.77

On 16 May 2008, 27-year-old Gkaw Ghay from Saw Muh Plaw village in Papun District was shot and killed by unidentified SPDC army soldiers.78

On 20 May 2008, Saw Gkaw Gkoh, a 40-year-old, civilian villager from Ya Thay Gkoh village in Toungoo District was detained by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #370 as he was travelling to his farm. He was escorted to a military camp where SPDC army officers Tun Win and Min Zaw reportedly ordered his execution. The date of his death is unknown.79

On 22 May 2008, 42-year-old Saw Koh Koh, from Gklay Kee village in Toungoo District was apprehended by SPDC army soldiers from MOC #21 and later executed for reasons which remain unknown.80

At approximately 4:00 pm on 23 May 2008, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #47 shot and injured two villagers from Yer Loh village in Tantabin Township, Toungoo District. According to the report, 23-year-old Saw Tar Tay Nay, was shot in the hand, while his companion, 16-year-old Naw Gka Tee was injured in both of her legs and now is subsequently unable to walk.81

On 4 June 2008, SPDC army soldiers opened fire on a group of internally displaced villagers in Toungoo District as they were attempting to return to their IDP hiding sites in the forest.62

On 7 June 2008, Saw Nay Soe was shot in the leg by SPDC army soldiers from MOC #21 in the Maw Nay Pwa area of Toungoo District. The soldiers were reportedly on a search and destroy patrol of the area in search of IDPs. No other villagers were reported as being killed or injured.83

On 4 August 2008, 38-year-old Saw Da Cho Cho was shot in the back and killed by SPDC army soldiers from MOC #10 when they spotted him walking along a forest path between the Kler Lah (Bawgali Gyi) relocation site and Ler Koh village in Toungoo District. The photograph reproduced below shows Saw Da Cho Cho’s body as it was found by local villagers.84
Chapter 3: Extra-Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions

The body of 38-year-old Saw Da Cho Cho, who had been shot in the spine by SPDC soldiers operating under MOC #10 as he was walking along a forest path near his village in Toungoo District of northern Karen State. For more information, see the preceding incident. [Photo: © FBR]

On 16 August 2008, 50-year-old Saw Dar Koe Ko from Maw Pa Der village, Toungoo District, was captured by SPDC soldiers from LIB #362 (Thein Htun commanding). He was later shot and killed at some point over the next few days. His body was found on 20 August 2008.85

On 1 August 2008, the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) described a number of separate incidents during April and May 2008 in which villagers had been shot by SPDC army soldiers in Toungoo District. The following table provides the details for all six victims (names censored in the original report).86

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 April 2008</td>
<td>Saw Gka Rer Bper</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Huh Muh Der</td>
<td>Killed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8 April 2008</td>
<td>Saw Tar Krit Krit</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Kler Lah</td>
<td>Killed by MOC #10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20 May 2008</td>
<td>Saw Ghaw Gkoh</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Ya Thay Gkoh</td>
<td>Killed by LIB #370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>22 May 2008</td>
<td>Saw Gko Gkoh</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Gklay Kee</td>
<td>Killed by MOC #21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>23 May 2008</td>
<td>Saw T----</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Yer Loh</td>
<td>Shot in arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>23 May 2008</td>
<td>Naw G----</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Yer Loh</td>
<td>Shot in leg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On 22 August 2008, the KHRG reported seven landmine injuries, two of which resulted in death, which occurred in Papun District between March and June 2008. The following table provides the details for all seven victims (names and villages censored in the original report). (For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines and Other Explosive Devices).87

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15 March 2008</td>
<td>Naw D----</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Hl----</td>
<td>Injured by landmine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23 March 2008</td>
<td>Saw Plah See</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Kay Pu</td>
<td>Killed by landmine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 April 2008</td>
<td>Saw B----</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>K----</td>
<td>Injured by landmine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 May 2008</td>
<td>Saw Hs----</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>T----</td>
<td>Injured by landmine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 May 2008</td>
<td>Saw Gk</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>K----</td>
<td>Injured by landmine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>17 May 2008</td>
<td>Saw P----</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Gk----</td>
<td>Injured by landmine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6 June 2008</td>
<td>Saw Gkler Htoo</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Hih Po Der</td>
<td>Killed by landmine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Also on 22 August 2008, the KHRG published information regarding the number of persons injured or killed in Papun District by SPDC army personnel during 2006 and 2007. The following table provides the details for all 44 victims, half of whom died as a result of their injuries (names and villages censored in the original report).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 January 2006</td>
<td>Saw Thoo</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Htee Baw Kee</td>
<td>Shot dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 April 2006</td>
<td>Saw Tha Weh Gklaw</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Pla Koh</td>
<td>Shot dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13 April 2006</td>
<td>Saw Dtaw Lay</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Gk’Lah Loh</td>
<td>Killed by landmine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24 April 2006</td>
<td>Saw Ree Say</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Bpaw Muh Der</td>
<td>Shot dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>24 April 2006</td>
<td>Saw N----</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Bp----</td>
<td>Injured by shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>31 May 2006</td>
<td>Saw M----</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Ht----</td>
<td>Injured by shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>21 July 2006</td>
<td>Saw Hs----</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Ht----</td>
<td>Injured by shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>26 December 2006</td>
<td>Saw Maw Dter</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Gk’Buh Kee</td>
<td>Shot dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>23 February 2007</td>
<td>Saw Maw Ngeh</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Gkwee Dtoo</td>
<td>Shot dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>16 March 2007</td>
<td>Saw Baw Kah</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Dtaw Koo Muh Der</td>
<td>Shot dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>16 March 2007</td>
<td>Saw Hser Nay Htoo</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Bpoh Gkla Der</td>
<td>Shot dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>21 March 2007</td>
<td>Saw Th Roh Htaw</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Gkuh Day</td>
<td>Shot dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>21 March 2007</td>
<td>Saw Dtar Yeh Ghay</td>
<td>40</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>21 March 2007</td>
<td>Saw Pah Hta Loo</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>22 March 2007</td>
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<td>Htee Bway Kee</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>25 March 2007</td>
<td>Saw P----</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>T----</td>
<td>Shot in leg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>25 March 2007</td>
<td>Saw N----</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Sh----</td>
<td>Shot in stomach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>27 March 2007</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Leh Kee</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>25 April 2007</td>
<td>Saw Lay Muh Say</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Dtaw Koo Muh Der</td>
<td>Shot dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>28 April 2007</td>
<td>Saw E----</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Y----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>28 April 2007</td>
<td>Saw Dt----</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>T----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>28 April 2007</td>
<td>Saw Pah Ghaw</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Gheh Yuh Der</td>
<td>Killed by landmine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>9 May 2007</td>
<td>Saw N----</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Hi----</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>12 May 2007</td>
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<td>Th----</td>
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<td>Th----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>27 October 2007</td>
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<td>Ht----</td>
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<td>N----</td>
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<tr>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Thoo Kler</td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>28 November 2007</td>
<td>Saw Hsoo Doh Wah</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Dtaw Baw Gkoh Der</td>
<td>Shot dead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On 5 September 2008, 60-year-old Naw Say Paw was killed by a landmine while returning to her forced relocation site from checking on her crops in the Hsaw Wah Der area of Toungoo District. The landmine had reportedly been planted by SPDC army soldiers from MOC #10. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines and Other Explosive Devices).
According to an article published in the SPDC-controlled *New Light of Myanmar*, two bombs exploded in the Theindan ward of Kyaukkyi Township on 11 September 2008. According to the report, the explosions killed two and wounded nine more. A third bomb was reportedly discovered at a nearby grocery store and defused before detonation. The SPDC accused the KNU of planting the three bombs and arrested a former KNLA private, Saw Ya Ko, who allegedly confessed to planting the bombs. The KNU denied the allegations, claiming that the SPDC was “using underhand tactics to discredit the KNU”. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines and Other Explosive Devices).90

On 12 September 2008, 15-year-old Saw May Htoo was killed when SPDC army soldiers from LIB #364 shelled Klay Soe Kee village, Toungoo District with mortars. Saw Da Boe Bo, 14, was also reportedly injured in the bombardment.91

On 15 September 2008, four fish farm owners from Ler Doh Township in Nyaunglebin District were arrested by SPDC army soldiers when they were unable to pay SPDC-demanded bribes. All four villagers were sent to the Tetu SPDC army camp. There, one villager was released for reasons unknown. One of the other villagers, Saw Oh Thi, was then sent to the IB #60 headquarters where he was accused of “listening to the radio” and executed by Colonel Ko Ko Aung. This is presumably a reference to listening to opposition broadcasts such as the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA) which are transmitted into the country via shortwave radio. The fate of the other two villagers remains unknown.92

On 10 October 2008, Saw Tha Pwee, a KNLA soldier attached to the KNLA 6th Brigade, was reportedly shot and killed by DKBA soldiers in Wah Kay Klo village of Dooplaya District.93

On 25 October 2008, 28-year-old Saw Dah Koo Roo was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #601, operating under MOC #21, in the vicinity of Play Kee village in Toungoo District. No further information about his death has been made available.94

On 30 October 2008, Saw Koo Roo, 25, from Play Pa village in Nyaunglebin District was shot and killed by SPDC soldiers subordinate to MOC #21. According to reports, he was attempting to deliver a message to a friend in a neighbouring village when the soldiers saw him and opened fire. He was hit in the right leg by the initial volley of gunfire and then shot twice in the head as he lay helpless on the ground. The photograph reproduced on the following page shows Saw Koo Roo’s body as found by villagers a few days after the incident.95

On 2 November 2008, two villagers forced to porter loads for a combined SPDC and DKBA column were injured when one of them stepped on a landmine near Kler Law Sei village in Dooplaya District. The two villagers, whose names were not given, were left to die by the soldiers, and were later found by KNLA soldiers. One of the victims died, while the other was sent to Umphang hospital in Thailand.96

On the evening of 20 November 2008, 52-year-old Dee Wah Hei and Naw Kay Mu from Thay Baw Boe village of Dooplaya District were executed by DKBA soldiers after being accused of practicing black magic. Soldiers from DKBA Battalion #907 went to Dee Wah Hei’s residence after he was accused of using black magic against the DKBA. The soldiers took him and his wife under the house and stabbed them to death. Their children escaped and fled into the forest. At the time of publication, the HRDU had received no information regarding any investigation into the incident or if the perpetrators had been punished for their actions.97
On 16 December 2008, SPDC army soldiers from IB #101 killed four villagers trading oxen and buffaloes in Kasehdo Township of Mergui-Tavoy District (Tenasserim Division). The names of the victims are as follows:

1. Saw Hut Phloe; 16 years old; and 
2. Saw Dah Htoo Phoe, 18 years old; 
3. Saw Hser Thel, 35 years old; and 
4. Saw Deedi, 40 years old.98

At approximately 6:00 pm on 27 December 2008, 7-year-old Ma Ne Mya was abducted from her home by an SPDC army soldier from LIB #350 while her parents were away joining in the Karen New Year celebrations. The soldier reportedly took her from her home in Ma Oo Bin village in Nyaunglebin District, and raped her. She was then shot and killed by the soldier when she began to cry for help. According to a FBR report published on 24 January 2009, the following day, Ma Ne Mya’s parents and the local village leaders reported the case to Captain Thet Khaing of LIB #350. In response, however, Captain Thet Khaing extorted a total of one million kyat from ten local business owners as both compensation for the crime and also to bribe the parents into not pursuing the case any further. Since the incident, LIB #350 has moved out of the area and has been replaced by IB #73. (For more information, see Chapter 16: Rights of the Child).99

This photograph shows the body of 25-year-old Karen villager Saw Koo Roo who was shot in the leg by SPDC army soldiers from MOC #21 who then killed him execution-style with two further gunshots to the head. For more information, see the incident on the previous page dated 30 October 2008. [Photo: © FBR]
Karenni State

According to an article published in the *Kantarawaddy Times* on 1 September 2008, SPDC army commander Naing Naing Oo from LIB #336 shot and killed a convict porter in a “fake battle” in Dowkuli village near Loikaw on an unspecified date earlier in 2008. Khu Nye Reh, an administrator from Loikaw Township, stated that SPDC army soldiers were feigning battles with Karenni insurgents and reporting to their superiors that they had killed the insurgents. Khu Nye Reh added that:

“[T]he Generals ordered [the SPDC army battalions] to defeat the insurgent groups in that area but they could not because they fear to face sudden and unexpected attacks and counter attacks of Karenni insurgent groups. That's why they find the easy way [and stage the battles].”

According to Khu Nye Reh, prior to the staged battle, the soldiers had apprehended an unidentified opium trader, confiscated all of his money and sold his drugs so that they could buy a rifle and a uniform from an unnamed Karenni ceasefire group which they dressed him in before killing him and claiming him as an insurgent casualty.

It is believed that LIB #336 had staged other battles in the Loikaw and Shadaw areas, using porters taken from prisons to serve as the fatalities. However, these allegations have not been independently verified. One former SPDC army soldier who fought against Karenni insurgents for over five years claimed to have never heard of such a practice: “there were incidents when they shot porters who are too weak to walk and sometimes they are burnt alive but I have never heard about fake battles”. (For more information, see Chapter 7: Forced Labour and Forced Conscription).

Magwe Division

At approximately 8:00 pm on 30 January 2008, Ko San Thaung from Gu Phyu village in Chauk Township died on the fourth day of his detention by local police. Sources have maintained that San Thaung had been initially arrested under suspicion of stealing “golden accessories” from a village school. Large “welts” were seen on San Thaung’s neck and body during his funeral, leading many residents of the village to believe his death was due to police brutality during his interrogation. (For more information, see Chapter 2: Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment).

On 25 June 2008, it was reported that in the week prior, a man had died after being beaten by police officers during his interrogation at the Magwe Police Station. The man, whose name had not been confirmed, was arrested after being caught stealing a Buddhist statue from an local pagoda. He was under suspicion of being an important member of a criminal gang that had been stealing Buddhist statues from Magwe, Minbu and other nearby townships. At the time of publication, his affiliation with the gang remained unconfirmed. (For more information, see Chapter 1: Arbitrary Detention and Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances).
**Mandalay Division**

On 10 September 2008, 19-year-old university student Nummoneshin was stabbed to death by a group of drunken men in Myingyan Township as he was returning home after celebrating a Buddhist festival. The victim was reportedly an outspoken activist involved in unspecified political movements. And it is believed that members of the Myingyan District USDA and their relatives were among the group of assailants. Some of his fellow students have alleged that Nummoneshin was killed due to his political stance. Local police reportedly arrested ten suspects in relation to the incident, but residents say that no further action has been taken by the police to charge anyone with the murder. No further information related to the episode has emerged since.

On 10 October 2008, the DVB reported that 45-year-old Myint Soe, the caretaker of the Chan Har Gyi Pagoda in the Meiktila Township, was stabbed to death by unknown assailants. Following the attack, his attackers stole his personal belongings, including a ring that he was wearing. Local residents reported that there had been a recent increase in crime due to economic hardship.

On 2 November 2008, 19-year-old Sat Paing Htun was stabbed and killed by SPDC army Captain Aung Tayzar in Meiktila Township. According to reports, Captain Aung Tayzar had summoned Sat Paing Htun and his friends to a meeting, but when they refused; the enraged captain sought out Sat Paing Htun, stabbed him and killed him. The original report did not elaborate on the fate of his companions. Following his death, Sat Paing Htun’s remains were sent to a distant cemetery in Latphakhaung District for burial, presumably to remove the evidence. Sat Paing Htun’s family was later offered 1.5 million kyat in compensation by Captain Aung Tayzar, though it remains unclear if Captain Aung Tayzar was charged for the murder by local authorities.

**Mon State**

On 2 March 2008, a husband and wife were shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers attached to LIB #31 while working on their rubber plantation in Ye Township. According to reports, the pair was accused of violating travel restrictions which had recently been enacted in the area. The wife was reportedly killed on site while the husband was said to have died some time later in a local hospital.

At approximately 3:00 pm on 11 June 2008, a clash broke out between SPDC army soldiers from IB #31 and a Monland Restoration Party (MRP) unit. According to the report by the Independent Mon News Agency (IMNA), the SPDC army soldiers were ambushed by the Mon insurgents while travelling along the Ye Khaw Za road near Kabya (Mahea) village, reportedly killing SPDC Captain Thein Khet Hlaing and three SPDC army soldiers. MRP Captain Een Dae was also reported to have been killed while attempting to retrieve weapons dropped by fallen SPDC army soldiers. Two more MRP soldiers were reportedly killed as they attempted to retreat, as was an unnamed local villager who was caught in the crossfire. Villagers have reportedly been detained, tortured and killed on suspicion of aiding the MRP over the past six years in which the group has been active in the area. Meanwhile, local villagers have also claimed that the MRP soldiers shot at an unspecified number of villagers and members of the Hangan village militia returning from a local pagoda in April 2008. No further information on this shooting has been made available. (For more information, see Chapter 18: Ethnic Minority Rights).
At approximately 8:00 pm on 12 June 2008, an SPDC army communications corporal from IB #34 was shot and killed by another soldier in their barracks at Three Pagoda Pass. The incident reportedly followed a beating that the corporal had given to the soldier while drunk. The soldier was also reportedly later killed by their commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Aye Ko Ko, although the date on which this second incident allegedly occurred is unknown.108

On 17 November 2008, three insurgents from an unnamed Mon insurgent group and one villager were killed by SPDC army soldiers from IB #299. According to reports, the group was ambushed while eating lunch beside a stream near Man Aung village in the southern Ye Township. The deceased villager, identified as Nai A Saing, was reportedly taken from his rubber plantation and forced to carry supplies by the insurgent group. Villagers in the area said that they now feared working in their remote farms, due to the risk of being conscripted to do forced labour for both the insurgents and the SPDC army in the area.109

Pegu Division

On 12 February 2008, 16-year-old Than Zaw Moe died in Letpadan Township. According to the DVB, Than Zaw Moe was an orphan studying at Letpadan Township Basic Education High School and was last seen at his school’s marching band performance. According to local residents, only a few individuals from the orphanage had attended Than Zaw Moe’s funeral on 13 February 2008, but when a person from a nearby ward expressed his concern to local authorities, Than Zaw Moe’s body was exhumed and an autopsy performed. Upon inspection, his body displayed numerous bruises to the neck and a large wound to the back of the head that residents describe as looking “like he had been hit with something hard”. Than Zaw Moe’s numerous injuries indicated that his death was likely not of natural causes. Local residents stated that they had expected an investigation to have been opened into his death, and when one was not, they were pressured by local authorities not to file an official complaint. Some local residents speculated that Than Zaw Moe was beaten and killed by the unnamed owner of the orphanage, alleging that he did not properly care for the children under his charge and often made them work in his privately-owned brick baking factory. No further reports of the incident have emerged since.110

On 9 February 2007, Lin Lin Naing was reportedly found hanging dead in his cell at the Phadoe Police Station in the Kyauktaga Township after having being arrested the night before on allegations of shoplifting. While no allegations of foul play were made in the original report, his body was quickly disposed of by the police without notifying his family.111

On 4 October 2008, SPDC army soldier Kyaw Shwe Maung from LIB #707 shot and injured an SPDC army major, and shot and killed an SPDC army captain in Aye Chan Tha Ya village of Oakpho Township before fleeing from the battalion. Soldiers and local police were reportedly involved trying to ascertain his whereabouts. Incidents of SPDC army soldiers shooting and killing their superior officers are not rare occurrences. Mistreatment of rank and file soldiers by their superiors has on numerous occasions resulted in the soldiers killing their superiors, deserting or staging “small mutinies”. Five days later, on the evening of 9 October 2008, Kyaw Shwe Maung was shot and killed by the Aye Mya Tharyar police chief when he was seen riding a motorcycle through Aye Mya Tharyar village.112
Rangoon Division

In a 2 February 2008 report, the Mizzima News commented on Human Rights Watch’s (HRW) claims that over 100 demonstrators had been killed during the September 2007 Saffron Revolution protests, pointing out that the figures provided by HRW were much higher than the official figures provided by the regime and also much higher than those deaths which could be verified by the United Nations. Similarly, in the press release accompanying its 10 March 2008 report: Bullets in the Alms Bowl: An analysis of the brutal SPDC suppression of the Saffron revolution protests, the HRDU argued that:

“While the SPDC have stated that 15 persons died during the protests, the UN Special Rapporteur on Burma, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro asserts that more than double this number died in Rangoon alone. Meanwhile, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma (AAPPB) today maintains that at least 72 persons still remain unaccounted for. Still, these numbers are conservative, and with protests staged in no fewer than 66 towns and cities across the country, many of which lack reliable information, coupled with the systematic removal of the dead and wounded from the site of each crackdown, and the disposal of the bodies during secret night time cremations, the number of fatalities may well be as high as a hundred. Sadly, though, just as had happened following the 1988 protests, we may never know the true human toll.”

On 4 February 2008, the body of an unnamed USDA member from the Thone Thate ward in Hlaingthaya Township was found decapitated at his residence in Tantabin Township.

On 8 February 2008, ten persons drowned when an 11-meter boat carrying Buddhist pilgrims capsized in the Tavoy River, 560 kilometres south of Rangoon. It was reported that nine of the victims were women and that 26 other passengers were rescued. An article published in Indian Hindustan Times blamed the deaths on negligence and the poor safety standards regulated by the regime which would routinely permit the use of “old and often dilapidated vehicles for transport.”

On 10 February 2008, seven persons were killed and ten persons were injured in a collision between two vehicles in Rangoon’s Hlaingthaya Township. The injured were reportedly taken to a hospital in Insein, Rangoon for treatment. The cause of the accident was not reported.

On 3 March 2008, a family of four and their maid were shot and killed in their residence in Green Bank, Kamayut Township. According to the Police Chief Brigadier General Khin Yi, the shell casings of domestically-produced bullets stamped with Myanmar Defence Products Industries (MDPI; the leading producer and supplier of arms and munitions to the SPDC army) were found at the scene. The motive for the shooting was reported to remain unknown at the time of publication, although a number of possible suspects were arrested by the police in relation to the incident. The surviving family members were reported to later have been paid an undisclosed sum of money and told to refrain from filing further complaints, while the SPDC’s censorship board punished a number of local weekly journals, including Seven Days, for running the story. Those killed included:

1. Sao Kyi Pha (aka Charlie), 60 years old;
2. San San Myint, his wife, 58 years old;
3. Mya Sandar, his daughter, 36 years old;
4. Hnin Pwint Aye, his daughter, 27 years old; and
5. Ma Ei Phau, their maid, 15 years old.
On 11 March 2008, one of the unnamed suspects detained for the murder that occurred on 3 March 2008 (detailed in the preceding incident) died while under interrogation by the authorities in a Rangoon police facility. Despite his arrest, local residents still reportedly questioned his guilt. According to the Mizzima News, “[t]he crime scene was in well guarded posh colony, almost impossible for a stranger to enter without being noticed”.119

Early in the morning of 3 May 2008, police and riot police at Insein Prison opened fire on rioting inmates, killing 36 prisoners and wounding a further 70. According to reports, approximately 1,500 detainees had been moved to the Main Prison Hall #1 after the roofs of several of the prison's buildings had been destroyed by Tropical Cyclone Nargis. In protest of the cramped and unsafe conditions, a number of prisoners set fire to a portion of the prison, prompting the guards to respond in a predictable fashion. According to the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), four prisoners who were believed to have been responsible for starting the fires were later tortured and executed by prison authorities.120

On 14 July 2008, the dead body of an unnamed 60-year-old woman was discovered bound in her residence on Hledan Street of Kamayut Township. The cause and those responsible for her death were not reported. At the time of the original report, an investigation was said to have been initiated by local police.121

At approximately 8:00 pm on 9 September 2008, an unidentified 29-year-old man was stabbed to death for no apparent motive by four assailants in a marketplace in Hlaingthaya Township. At the time of the attack, the man was reportedly walking with a woman, although she was reportedly unharmed and nothing was stolen. No one was arrested in connection to the incident.122

On 10 September 2008, the Irrawaddy reported that a week earlier, an unnamed 40-year-old officer with the Myanmar Internal Revenue Department was murdered at his residence in Hlaingthaya Township. The motive for his death remains unknown and no further details of his death have been made available.123
On 10 September 2008, the *Irrawaddy* reported that an unidentified couple had been murdered in Thingangyun Township on an unspecified date in August. No further information has been published concerning the incident, however, incidents of armed robbery rose sharply throughout the township at that time when people began becoming desperate after losing everything in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Nargis. Many displaced families had moved into the township with nothing after their homes were destroyed, while many of the existing residents had lost much of their food and possessions in the storm.\(^{124}\)

At approximately 2:00 am on 13 October 2008, a Rangoon bus exploded killing seven people and severely injuring one in front of Rangoon Technological University (RTU). The *Irrawaddy* News Magazine reported that a Rangoon police officer familiar with the case, as well as others, believed the deaths to have been caused by the explosion of the bus’ compressed natural gas (CNG) tank, but the junta-backed *New Light of Myanmar* reported that the cause of the blast was still unclear. It was also reported that according to local residents, the debris and bodies of the victims lay in the street for five hours before the police arrived on the scene. This was only the most recent incident in a string of bus explosions in Rangoon. Other incidents occurred in early September and on 10 October; luckily in both circumstances neither had causalities. Many Rangoon residents believe the newly converted buses to CNG are unsafe and that the IGE Co. Ltd. only received the contract to convert the buses due to the fact that IGE is run by two sons of the Minister of Industry Aung Thaung. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines and Other Explosive Devices).\(^{125}\)

At approximately 5:30 pm on 19 October 2008, an unidentified man was killed by a small bomb in Shwepyitha Township. No further information regarding the blast or the identity of the victim was disclosed. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines and Other Explosive Devices).\(^{126}\)

A 16-year-old Karen internally displaced villager from Htee Baw Kee village in Papun District, Karen State receiving medical treatment from Karen medics after she had stepped on a landmine that had been planted in her abandoned village by SPDC army soldiers in March 2008. For more information, see Chapter 4: Landmines and Other Explosive Devices. [Photo: © KHRG]
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Chapter 3: Extra-Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions

Sagaing Division

On 19 December 2008, an unidentified man from Manipur, India was shot and killed in his residence in Kalemyo in Kale Township, Sagaing Division. Sources living in the same ward alleged that the man was affiliated with an unnamed Manipuri insurgent group operating against the Indian Government and that he also had personal connections with SPDC officers in the area. The area is reputed to be popular with arms smugglers moving weapons between the two countries and it is believed that he may have been involved in the illegal trade of weapons across the border.127

Shan State

In January 2008, the Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) reported that on 5 July 2007 six persons were shot and killed during a skirmish between SPDC army soldiers from LIB #569 and unspecified “Shan insurgents” in Saai Khao village in Kunhing Township which reportedly lasted for between two and three hours. According to the original report, the SPDC army soldiers came upon the Shan insurgents while in Saai Khao village at which point both sides opened fire. The villagers tried to flee, but a number were caught in the crossfire ultimately resulting in the death of at least four men and a further two women.128

Also in January 2008, the SHRF reported that on 29 August 2007, 27-year-old Shan villager, Zaai Tu, was tortured and beaten to death by SPDC army soldiers in Wan Saak village of Kunhing Township. According to the source, Zaai Tu had been attending to his family’s oxen with his 7-year-old sister, Naang Ing, when they were approached by the soldiers. The pair was accused of being informants for “Shan insurgents” and though the report failed to specify which Shan insurgent group it was discussing, it is likely they were referring to the Shan State Army- South (SSA-S). Naang Ing was tied to a tree while the soldiers interrogated and beat Zaai Tu to death in front of her. Naang Ing remained tied to the tree and shouting for help until the following morning when she was discovered by a local villager. Naang Ing later reported the incident to her parents and village officials who lodged a formal complaint with the local SPDC authorities. However, in response to their allegations, the family was told that only Shan insurgents would do “such cruel things to innocent people” and the matter was quickly dismissed.129

On 4 January 2008, SPDC army soldiers killed one villager under interrogation in Murng Nawng village tract in Kyee Thee Township. According to reports, three unidentified villagers were apprehended and interrogated over the movement of Shan soldiers through the area. The trio were beaten by the soldiers when they denied having seen any Shan soldiers in the area. The SPDC army soldiers shot and killed one of the villagers but eventually released the other two.130

In February 2008, it was reported that on 4 November 2007, four unidentified persons were shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers as they were travelling en route to Mong Hsat Township. According to the SHRF, SPDC army soldiers ordered the four villagers off the public vehicle that they were travelling in when they arrived at the checkpoint on the Kho Nam Ten Bridge in Son Oi village in Mong Hsat Township. The villagers were returning to their homes in Burma after travelling to Thailand for work. The driver of the vehicle reportedly then telephoned other drivers operating along the route, advising them not carry passengers across that particular checkpoint. It was reported ten days later, that all four passengers had been shot and killed by the SPDC army soldiers when, villagers from Son Oi village were forced to cremate the bodies. The identities of the victims remain unknown as the soldiers had either confiscated or destroyed their documents, leaving no record of who they were.131
On 20 March 2008, 48-year-old Lung Aw was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers from IB #248, after serving as a porter for the military. A column of approximately 50 SPDC army soldiers arrived at Nawng Phurk village in Laikha Township and captured three villagers to serve as porters for the unit. The porters had their hands tied to yokes that are typically used on water buffalo and forced to haul military supplies to Nawng Hee village in Nansang Township. Once there, the porters were then tied up for the night. The SPDC army soldiers state that Lung Aw attempted to run away and that is why he was shot. His body was then disposed of in a location unknown to his family. The two remaining porters were later detained in Lai-Kha village and at the time of the report were still being detained. (For more information, see Chapter 7: Forced Labour and Forced Conscription). The names of the three villagers involved were:

1. Lung Aw, 48 years old, from the Nawng Phurk village, shot dead;
2. Kan-Na, 37 years old, from the Nawng Phurk village, fate unknown; and
3. Lung Su, 53 years old, from the nawng Phurk village, fate unknown.132

On 30 April 2008, SPDC army soldiers forced four local villagers from Man Tat village in Namhkan Township to build a raft to cross the Shweli River. As they were constructing the raft, some of the bamboo poles floated away in the current so the soldiers demanded that the villagers retrieve them and complete the raft. Three of the four villagers drowned. The surviving villager stated that the other three villagers were pulled under the water by the swift current and drowned. The sole surviving villager was then threatened by local police not speak of the incident and told that he would be punished if the incident was made public. Compensation consisting of 500,000 kyat and five bags of rice was paid to the families of the three deceased men. (For more information, see Chapter 7: Forced Labour and Forced Conscription). The names of the three men who drowned were as follows:

1. Zau Kun, 31 years old;
2. Naw Hsan, 29 years old; and
3. Mai Yai Tun, 25 years old.133

On the evening on 4 May 2008, one official with the junta-affiliated USDA was killed and another two officials were injured by unidentified gunmen in an unnamed village in Namhkan Township. The three officials, plus an entourage of ten police, had reportedly come to Namhkan Township to pressure members of the local community to vote "yes" in the upcoming constitutional referendum. The incident took place as the group was leaving Nawngkhon Monastery. It was unclear who the gunmen were, but one local youth stated that the shooting was most likely in relation to the second rehearsal polling that the officials were conducting. The USDA member had previously conducted a rehearsal poll in the area to ensure that the result would be an overwhelming "yes" from this township during the actual referendum vote. However, the first rehearsal polling results were unsatisfactory so the USDA member returned with police to force a more favourable second rehearsal. The names of those injured in the incident are as follows:

1. Kyaw Myint, 57 years old, fatally shot in the face and chest;
2. Kyaw Sein, 45 years old, shot in the thigh; and
3. U Than Hlaing, 50 years old, shot in the abdomen and arm.134

According to the junta-backed the New Light of Myanmar, on 28 May 2008, nine sawmill workers were attacked, during which eight were allegedly killed by the opposition Shan State Army – South (SSA-S) in Mawkmai Township. In response to these allegations, on 3 June 2008, SSA-S leader Colonel Yawd Serk issued a statement denying his army’s involvement in the incident, stating that, “The SSA[-S] isn’t active in the said area. There are only two armed groups there: The Burma [SPDC] Army and the (ceasefire) Shan State Nationalities People’s Liberation Organization [SNPLO]”. Yawd Serk countered that, “This kind of policy is only adopted and carried out by the Burma Army. Their favorite [sic.] ploy is to kill people, sometimes even by wearing SSA insignias, and then putting the blame on us”.135
On the evening of 13 July 2008, two SPDC army officers and two civilian teak traders engaged in a gun battle following an argument over the allocation of profits from the teak traders’ business, leading to the death of all four men. According to the report published by the Shan Herald Agency for News (SHAN), the businessmen were the first to open fire. The names of those involved were as follows:

1. Major Aung Thaha, Deputy Battalion Commander of IB #66;
2. Captain Soe Min Aye, from IB #66;
3. U Soe; and
4. Zaw Htoo.136

On the evening of 23 July 2008, SPDC army soldiers from IB #287, assisted by soldiers from the “Murng Zern Group” (an SPDC-allied ceasefire group named after its commander Murng Zern) apprehended and tortured 49-year-old village headman Zaai Awng Nyunt from Murng Sawng village. The soldiers continued to Ho Hu village where they also arrested 45-year-old villager Ma Ha. The two villagers were then taken into the forest where they were tortured and beaten to death. Local villagers found the two bodies the following day, one of which had a letter pinned to it declaring that both villagers were informants for Shan insurgent groups and were thus killed accordingly. The villagers perceived this letter as a warning not to pursue the issue and as a result, no formal complaints were made over the incident.137

On 26 July 2008, 38-year-old Hsang Sai was kicked to death after his chronic hernia kept him from carrying the load given to him by SPDC army soldiers from IB #287. Hsang Sai’s family was awarded with one 50 kilogram sack of rice in compensation and warned against making the incident public. (For more information, see Chapter 7: Forced Labour and Forced Conscriptio).138

In September 2008, the SHRF reported that on an unspecified date in October 2007, 38-year-old Zaai Zaai was beaten to death while portering for SPDC army soldiers from IB #286. Zaai Zaai and Zaai Thun, 24, both civilian villagers from Wan Naa village, were forced to serve as porters for the SPDC. After carrying heavy loads for ten days, Zaai Zaai collapsed, unable to continue, caused, in part by the hernia which was causing him great pain. The SPDC troops accused him of being lazy and proceeded to beat him with sticks and kick him in the chest until he was dead. The soldiers threw his body down into the Huay Luk Luk ravine before forcing Zaai Thun to continue portering. Zaai Thun was released two days later and was told that he should say that Zaai Zaai had died due to an illness. Zaai Zaai’s family was compensated with one bag of rice.139

In January 2009, the SHRF reported that in early 2008 two unnamed villagers from Pan Niu village in Mong-Kung Township had been shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #514 while searching for their buffaloes. The bodies of the pair were found in the forest by local villagers covered in twigs and branches in an apparent, albeit inept, attempt to hide the evidence of their murder.140

Tenasserim Division

On 25 January 2008, 60-year-old Klaw Noh from Ler Mu Lah Township was shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers from LIB #594. According to the report, originally published in the Karen-language Kwekalu newspaper, the soldiers had earlier discovered the IDP hiding site where Klaw Noh lived, detained and bound all of the residents, and seized their supplies of rice, clothing, livestock, cash, gold and other valuables. The IDPs were later released but warned not to return to the site under pain of death. Klaw Noh, however, returned to the site on 25 January to see what he was able to salvage of his belongings when he was spotted by the soldiers and shot.141
In February 2008, it was reported that on 20 December 2007, 45 persons drowned after a small passenger boat carrying 99 people collided with a larger fishing vessel near Kawthaung at the southernmost point of Burma in Tenasserim Division. Most of the victims were believed to have been Chin migrants *en route* to Malaysia to be reunited with their families or in search of work.¹⁴²

On 8 June 2008, an article was published by the Voice of America (VOA) News in which former SPDC Deputy Chief of Mission at the Burmese Embassy in Washington, Aung Lin Htut, testified that 81 persons were shot, killed and buried on Christie Island in the Mergui Archipelago in 1998. In the article, Aung Lin Htut explained how he had been stationed in the area at the beginning of May 1998 when an SPDC army unit led by Colonel Zaw Min discovered and “eliminated” 59 persons living on Christie Island under the direct orders of SPDC chairperson Senior General Than Shwe. Also according to Aung Lin Htut, a few days later a Thai fishing vessel was seized off the coast of Christie Island and the 22 fishermen aboard were also shot and buried in unmarked graves on the island. Aung Lin Htut sought asylum in the United States following the 2005 purge of former Prime Minister and Intelligence Chief Khin Nyunt.¹⁴³

This photograph depicts a collection of 5.56 mm bullet casings and 40 mm grenade shells left behind after SPDC army soldiers from IB #240 had attacked Te Mu Der village in Papun District, Karen State on the morning of 4 June 2008. As soon as the shooting began, all of the villagers fled the village with what they could carry on their backs. Anything that was left behind was either stolen or destroyed by the soldiers as they ransacked the village. Luckily, no one was injured in the attack. For more information, see “Destruction of Property” in Chapter 8: Deprivation of Livelihood. [Photo: © FBR]
Endnotes


4 Source: Ibid.


7 Source: Ibid.


9 Source: Ibid.

10 Source: Ibid.


12 Source: Ibid.


15 Source: Ibid.


17 Source: Ibid.


20 Source: Ibid.

21 Source: Ibid.


23 Source: Ibid.


29 Source: Ibid.

30 Source: Ibid.

31 Source: “Two villagers killed by the DKBA,” Kwekalu News, 29 November 2008, translation by HRDU.


37 Source: Ibid.


41 Source: Ibid.


60 Source: “Burma Army Attacks Villages in Eastern Burma as they Obstruct Relief to Cyclone Victims in the South,” FBR, 29 May 2008.
67 Source: “People struggle to survive attacks in northern Karen State as villagers are captured and killed in central Karen State, Burma,” FBR, 29 January 2008.
Chapter 3: Extra-Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions

94 Source: “Villager killed as 1,971 people are chased into the jungle by the Burma Army in Western Karen State,” FBR, 4 November 2008.
95 Source: Ibid.
97 Source: “Two villagers killed by the DKBA,” Kwekalu News, 29 November 2008, translation by HRDU.
98 Source: “Villager killed as 1,971 People are Chased into the Jungle by the Burma Army in Western Karen,” FBR, 4 November 2008.
100 Source: “Porters Killed During Fake Battles Created By SPDC Soldiers,” Kantarawaddy Times, 1 September 2008.
103 Source: “Student stabbed to death in Myinchang University,” Yoma3, 11 September 2008, translation by HRDU.
104 Source: “More Robberies in Meikhtila,” DVB, 10 October 2008, translation by HRDU.
105 Source: “Army Officer Stabs Youth to Death in Upper Burma,” DVB, 4 November 2008.
106 Source: “Two people shot, one fatally, in Ye Township, Mon State,” HURFOM, 6 March 2008.
119 Source: Ibid.
123 Source: Ibid.
124 Source: Ibid.
The Human Rights Documentation Unit (HRDU) is the research and documentation division of Burma’s government in exile; the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB). The HRDU was formed in 1994 to document the human rights crisis confronting the many and varied peoples of Burma, and to defend and promote those internationally recognised human rights that are inherent and inalienable for all persons irrespective of race, colour, creed, ethnicity or religion. To this end, the HRDU published the first Burma Human Rights Yearbook in 1995 to comprehensively document the systematic and egregious nature of the human rights abuses being perpetrated in Burma throughout the previous year. This report, the Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2008, represents the 15th annual edition of the Burma Human Rights Yearbook, which, combined with all previous editions collectively comprise well over 10,000 pages of documentation and provide an unbroken historical record spanning the past one and a half decades.

All editions of the Burma Human Rights Yearbook and all other reports published by the HRDU can be viewed online on the NCGUB website at http://www.ncgub.net as well as on the Online Burma Library at http://www.burmalibrary.org. Any questions, comments or requests for further information can be forwarded to the HRDU via email at enquiries/hrdu@gmail.com.

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