

HUMAN RIGHTS YEARBOOK

1998-99



BURMA

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This book is dedicated to the countless citizens of Burma who have sacrificed their homes, their freedom, and their lives to lifting the veil of terror that shrouds the truth in Burma today.

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**Views expressed in this book are not necessarily those of
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PREFACE

By

H.E. Dr. Sein Win
Prime Minister
National Coalition Government of
the Union of Burma

This edition of the Human Rights Yearbook coincides with an important human rights milestone, fifty years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Around the world, the movement for human rights is growing in strength. More people are successfully asserting their rights and many more governments from all over the world are now willing to subscribe to the human rights ideal. But a truth increasingly recognized around the world is still denied in Burma.

Forced labor continues on a massive scale and members of ethnic minorities are subjected by the regime to ethnic cleansing, rape and murder on account of their membership in an ethnic group. More, not fewer, prisoners of conscience are held. Burma in 1999 has just earned the distinction of holding the world's youngest prisoner of conscience, a three-year old girl arrested as a means of pressuring her dissident father.

The number of villages ethnically cleansed in Burma, especially in the Shan and Karenni States, is in the hundreds. Burma's one to two million refugees and internally displaced persons outnumber the entire population of Kosovo but the scale of the human rights disaster in Burma is too little recognized because it is so remote from the television news cameras that so often set international priorities.

This Yearbook is intended to methodically describe the abuses routinely inflicted on large number of Burma's people. But there is nothing routine in what each of the victims has suffered and for them, this book is a remembrance. The people of Burma continue to wait for what the rest of the world justly celebrates—the spreading power of the cause of human rights. The NCGUB is working to bring the advent of that day closer? and in the meantime, to document and remember what is happening.

I would like to thank all organizations and people who have assisted in our work to record the human rights violation perpetrated in our country.

Acknowledgement

Although people's representatives had been elected through free and fair elections in Burma in 1990, parliament has not been able to convene because the military dictatorship is brazenly and systematically violating the fundamental rights of the people.

The popular democratic uprising that began in August 1988 had resulted in the '8888 Uprising' which spread through the whole country. But under the brutal, cruel and power-hungry military clique, the people of Burma are still not able to enjoy their fundamental rights. In their fight for democracy and human rights, hundreds of Burmese people had sacrificed their lives and thousands had lost their property and livelihood. Thousands are still languishing in jails. But their struggle for freedom has not stopped. The struggle, in fact, is continuing in all forms and from all quarters, and will continue in one way or another until their rights are fully realized.

In the ten years spanning 8888 and 9999, neither the fundamental rights of the Burmese people nor democracy and ethnic rights have improved. They have, on the contrary, grown worse. In addition to the 200-plus people's representatives who had been elected through free and fair elections, more than 2000 members of opposition parties and activists — the majority of whom are from the NLD — are unjustly, unlawfully and lawlessly detained in prisons and interrogation centers, intimidated and tortured in various manners by the military intelligence. This clearly shows the extent of violation of democracy and human rights in Burma.

Not only there is no rule of law in Burma, there is no independent judiciary. Hence, during last year, the military controlled court, using unjust laws had summarily sentenced Daw San San, a woman parliamentarian and NLD member, to a lengthy 25-year imprisonment. Some student leaders were likewise given long sentences of up to 45 years. The only crime that they had committed, as the military had accused them of, was struggling and fighting for the restoration of human rights and democratic development in Burma through non-violent and peaceful means.

Ten years is a sufficiently long period for correctly assessing something. The UN has, for many years in a row, passed resolutions in connection with Burma. In this year's 55th UN Commission on Human Rights resolutions, it had been assessed that the military currently ruling Burma were systematically violating human rights. In the light of this, a question arises as to whether the civilized international community is not taking any action against the military dictatorship which is grossly and systematically abusing human rights. UN resolutions should not just be on paper and discarded to the wind. Actions corresponding to the resolutions should be taken.

The military authorities are engaging in activities more abominable than ethnic

cleansing and genocidal wars being conducted in some other parts of the world. A large number of Burmese citizens, particularly those from the ethnic minorities, continue to flee to neighbouring countries.

As the UN turns fifty, the civilized world has come to accept in more serious terms that human rights have no national boundaries. However, in South East Asia, particularly in Burma, the slogans “Asian Values” and “Non-interference in each other’s internal affairs”, are being interpreted to suit one’s interest, leaving room to define human rights as merely a right that respective governments allow their citizens to enjoy under certain circumstances. This yearbook documents some of the innumerable human rights abuses committed by the military regime in Burma in 1998-1999.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the members of the Norwegian Burma Council for their unwavering support in making this Report possible. In addition, I would like to thank all the ethnic organizations and the many individuals who supported this project. Sincere thanks also to all those people who helped prepare this book for publication, and many individuals whose names cannot be mentioned but whose contribution cannot go unnoticed. The very existence of the Human Rights Documentation Unit (HRDU) would not have been possible without the assistance of these friends of Burma. The emergence of the HRDU has given me a greatly satisfying opportunity to work closely with organizations that are noble and just and have a profound sympathy for the people of Burma. I wish to put on record my profound gratitude to the KHRG, KIC, HRFOM, MIS, SHRF, SHAN, CHRO, ABSDF, Burma Issue, Images Asia, ALTSEAN Burma and the Burma Relief Center for their enthusiastic assistance and cooperation for the publication of this book. I also would like to express my gratitude to the Euro-Burma Office which generously assisted the publication of this book.

May the world continue to take heed that the people of Burma, fifty one years after independence, are still living in stark fear under a military dictatorship because there is no rule of law and because gross human rights violations are being committed nationwide everyday. We feel that it is time the United Nations implemented the resolutions it has adopted in connection with Burma for several years in a row at the United Nations General Assembly.

Thein Oo
Minister for Justice (NCGUB) and
Coordinator
Human Rights Documentation Unit

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CRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS, TERMS, AND MEASUREMENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AASYC	All Arakanese Students and Youth Congress
ABSDF:	All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ABSDF/WB:	All Burma Students' Democratic Front - Western Burma
ABFSU:	All Burma Federation of Students Union
ABSL:	All Burma Students' League
ABYMU:	All Burma Young Monks Union
ALTSEAN:	Alternative Asean Network on Burma
aka:	also known as
ALP:	Arakan Liberation Party
approx:	approximately
ASC:	Arakanese Students' Congress
BAD:	Border Area Development Program
B.E.:	Burmese Era
Brig :	Brigadier
BI:	Burma Issues
BIG:	Burma Information Group
BPP:	Border Patrol Police (Thailand)
BRC:	Burmese Relief Center
BSPP:	Burma Socialist Program Party
Capt:	Captain
CEC:	Central Executive Committee
CHRO:	Chin Human Rights Organization
CNF:	Chin National Front
Comdr:	Commander
Col:	Colonel
Cpl:	Corporal
CPPSM:	Campaign for the Publicity of the People's Struggle in Monland
DDSI:	Directorate of Defense Services Intelligence
DKBA:	Democratic Kayin (Karen) Buddhist Army
DKBO:	Democratic Kayin Buddhist Organization
DPA:	Democratic Patriotic Army
DPNS:	Democratic Party for New Society
DVB:	Democratic Voice of Burma

FEC:	Foreign Exchange Certificate (See “Measurements”)
ft:	feet
FTUB:	Federation of Trade Unions, Burma
Gen:	General
HRDU:	Human Rights Documentation Unit
HRV:	Human Rights Violations
HURFOM:	Human Rights Foundation of Monland
IA:	Images Asia
IB:	Infantry Battalion
IDC:	Immigration Detention Center (Thailand)
IDP:	Internal Displace Persons
ILO:	International Labor Organization
Ind:	Independent
Lt:	Lieutenant
kg:	Kilogram
km:	Kilometer
KHRG:	Karen Human Rights Group
KIA:	Kachin Independence Army
KIC:	Karen Information Center
KIO:	Kachin Independence Organization
KNDA:	Karenni National Democratic Army
KNLA:	Karen National Liberation Army
KNPLF:	Karenni Nationality Peoples’ Liberation Front
KNPP:	Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU:	Karen National Union
LIB:	Light Infantry Battalion
LID:	Light Infantry Division
LORC:	Law and Order Restoration Council (on the ward, township, state, and division levels)
MAMD:	Mon Army, Mergui District
Maj:	Major
Ma Wa Ta:	Township-level SLORC authorities
MI:	Military Intelligence
MIS:	Military Intelligence Services (aka DDSI)
MIS:	Mon Information Service
m:	meter
mm:	millimeter
MNRC:	Mon National Relief Committee
MOGE:	Myanmar Oil & Gas Enterprise
MOI:	Ministry of Interior (Thailand)
MPs:	Members of Parliment
MSC:	Military Strategic Command

MTA:	Mong Tai Army
n.a.:	not available
Na Wa Ta:	State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)
NBC:	Norwegian Burma Council
NCGUB:	National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma
NCO:	Non-commissioned officer
NGO:	Non-governmental organization
NLD:	National League for Democracy
NLD (LA):	National League for Democracy (Liberated Area)
NLM:	<i>The New Light of Myanmar</i> (SLORC-controlled newspaper)
NMSP:	New Mon State Party
PDC:	Peace and Development Council
PSB:	Press Scrutiny Broad
RFA:	Radio Free Asia
SAIN:	Southeast Asia Information Network
Sd.:	Signed with signature
Sgt:	Sergeant
SHRF:	Shan Human Rights Foundation
S.H.A.N.:	Shan Herald Agency for News
SLORC:	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SPDC:	State Peace and Development Council
sq:	square
SSA:	Shan State Army
SSIA:	Shan State Independence Army
SUA:	Shan United Army
SURA:	Shan United Revolutionary Army
TOC:	Tactical Operations Command
UN:	United Nations
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
USDA:	Union Solidarity and Development Association

TERMS

<i>baht</i> :	monetary unit of Thailand (see “Measurements”).
Bo:	military commander.
Daw:	an honorific used to address an adult female
furlong:	(see “Measurements”)
Kawthoolei:	Karen name for the Karen nation.

Khun:	polite form of address in the Thai language
Ko:	Burmese form of address to a young male
kyat:	monetary unit in Burma
longyi:	Burmese word for sarong
Ma:	Burmese form of address to a young female
Mahn:	Burmese form of address to a Karen male
Maung:	Burmese form of address to a young male
Mehm/Min:	form of address to a young Mon male
Mi:	form of address to a Mon female
Nai:	Burmese form of address to an adult Mon male
Naw:	Burmese form of address to a Karen female
plah:	Karen measurement of distance, from elbow to fingertip (1 plah is under 2 feet)
pya:	100 pyas = 1 kyats
pyi:	eight-condensed-milk tin
Sai:	Burmese form of address to a young Shan male
Sangha:	Buddhist order of monks
Sao:	male of Shan royal descent
Saw:	form of address to a Karen male
Sayadaw:	presiding monk of a Buddhist monastery
Shwedagon:	The Great Pagoda in Rangoon
Tatmadaw:	Burmese Army
Thakin:	master; lord (used to address the British colonial rulers; later politicized by the Burmese independence movement in the 1930s)
tickle:	(see "Measurements")
tin:	(see "Measurements")
tract (village):	area consisting of 4-6 villages
U:	an honorific used to address an adult male in Burma
viss:	(see "Measurements")

MEASUREMENTS

acre:	1 acre = 4,840 sq. yards = 0.407 hectare 2.471 acres = 11,960 sq. yards = 1 hectare 640 acres = 1 sq. mile = 2.590 sq. kilometers
baht:	1 baht = 100 satang 36 baht = US\$ 1 (May 1999)
FEC:	1 FEC = US\$1 = kyat 6.5 (official) 1 FEC = Kyats 360 - 380 (unofficial)

furlong:	1 furlong = 220 yards (1/8) mile = 201 meters
lakh:	1 lakh = 100,000
tin:	1 tin (rice/condensed milk) = approx. 250 ml
viss:	1 viss = 3.6 lbs = 1.633 kg
	622.22 viss = 1 long ton (2,240 lbs) = 1.016 metric tons

NOTE ABOUT SPELLINGS:

Since there are no standardized transcriptions in the Roman alphabet for Burmese, Mon, and other ethnic languages, words are spelled variously, according to different spelling conventions or by how they sound (the spelling of Halockhani refugee camp is a classic example of this, by Westerners as well as Thais and locals). In addition, spellings have further been confused by the ruling junta's official Burmanization of well-known English terminology (e.g. Myanmar for Burma).

In order to avoid confusion and politicization, this report will restrict its use of language to the established and more widely-accepted anglicized spellings, since this report is written in English.

A list of alternative spellings from various sources are provided as follows:

Ayeyarwady:	Irrawaddy
Bagan:	Pagan
Bago:	Pegu
Bamar:	Burman
Dawei:	Tavoy
Hinthada:	Henzada
Hpa-an:	Pa-an
Kayah:	Karenni
Kayin:	Karen
Kyaing Don:	Kengtung
Magway:	Magwe
Mawlamyine:	Moulmein
Muang Tai:	Mong Tai
Myeit:	Mergui
Myanmar:	Burma
Patheingyi:	Bassein
Pyaw:	Prome

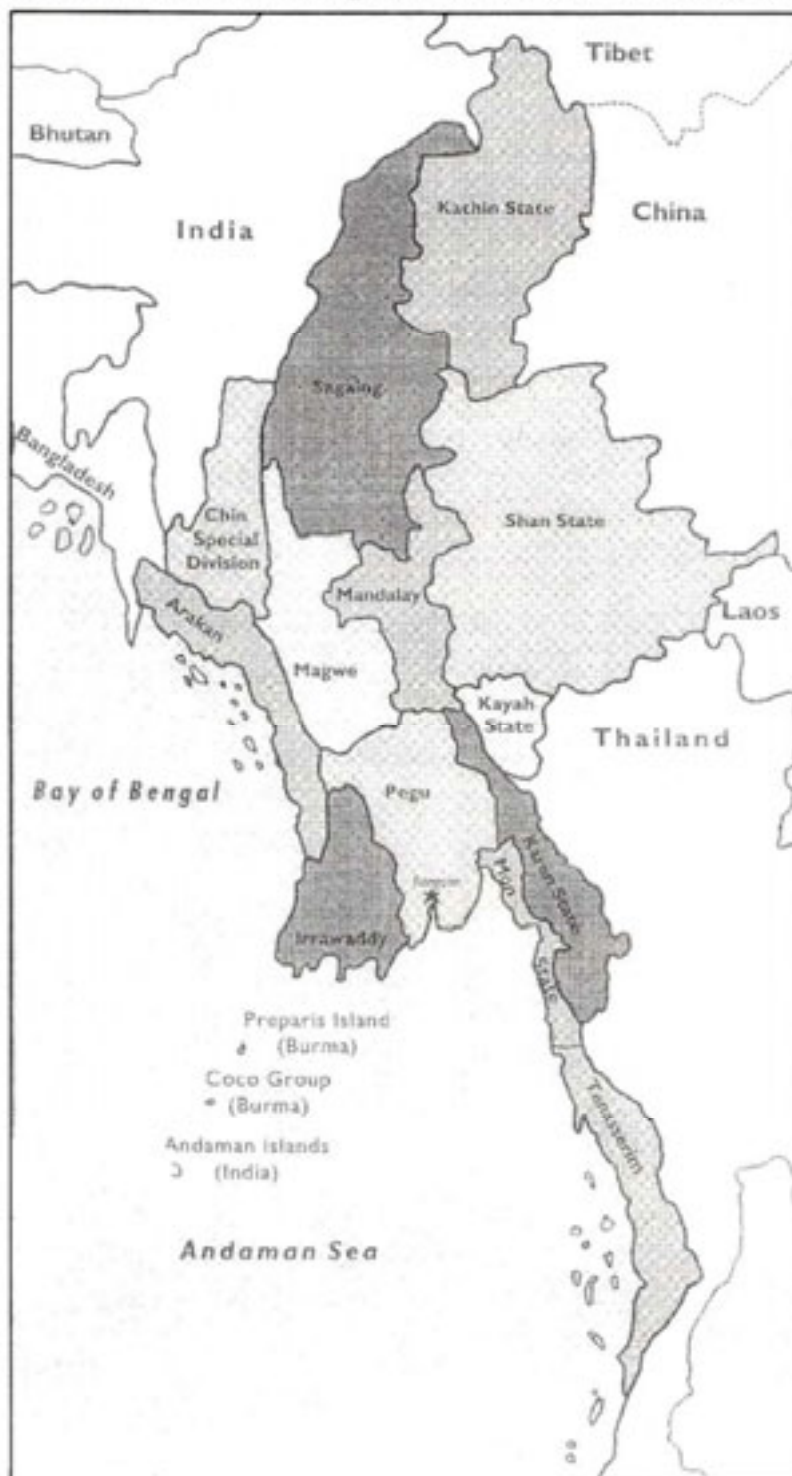
Sittoung:	Sittaung
Sittwe, Sittway:	Akyab
Tanintharyi:	Tenasserim
Thandwai:	Sandoway
Thanlwin:	Salween River
Taungyin:	Moei River
Toungoo:	Taungoo
Yangon:	Rangoon

BURMA AT A GLANCE: FACTS AND FIGURES

Country name:	Union of Burma (1948); Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma (1974); Union of Myanmar (1989)
Area:	261,000 sq miles
Coastline:	1,600 miles
Population:	48.8 million
Urban population:	26%
Refugees:	approximately 300,000 in Thailand; 10,000 in China and India; 21,800 in Bangladesh
Internally displaced:	approximately two million people
Birth rate:	2.1%
Life expectancy:	60 years
Adult literacy:	19.4%
School attendance:	26.7%
People per telephone:	265.5
People per TV:	22.0
People per doctor:	12,500
Infant mortality:	79
Languages:	Arakanese, Burmese, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Shan, Wa, English and more than 100 minority dialects
Religions:	Buddhist (85%), Animist (5%), Christian (4.5%), Muslim (4%), Hindu (1.5%)
Per capita GDP(PPP):	US\$ 790
GDP growth:	5%
Per capital GNP (nom):	US\$ 765
Savings % of GDP:	12%
Reserves excl. gold:	US\$ 0.3 billion
Cur acct. balance:	US\$ 0.4 billion
Exports 12 months:	US\$ 1.0 billion

Inflation CPI:	67%
Foreign debt:	US\$ 5.6 billion
GDP spending:	3. 1 % on military (non-SLORC figures: over 50%), 2.2% education, 0.8% health.
Wage earners:	6 million (rough estimate)
LDC status:	since 1987
Natural resources:	tin, plutonium, zinc, copper, cobalt, gold, rubies, jade, teak (80% of world's reserves), fish (704 metric ton/ year), gas, oil, rice, sesame, groundnuts
Agriculture:	68% of workforce employed in agriculture; 15% of arable land; less than 50% of potentially productive land under cultivation
Rice exports:	3.5 million tons (1,930); 2 million tons (1962); 20,000 tons (1988)
Opium production:	1,300 tons (1988), 2,800 tons (1997) (70% of US market)
Administrative areas:	Seven States (Arakan, Chin, Mon, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Shan); Seven Divisions (Irrawaddy, Magwe, Mandalay, Pegu, Rangoon, Sagaing, Tenasserim)
Last election:	May 27, 1990; NLD won more than 82% of legislative seats

Map of Burma showing State and Division borders



Chronology

1998

- January 4:** The Petroleum Authority of Thailand Exploration and Production Public Company, Ltd. (PTTEP) announces that it is seeking Thai military cooperation to build the Yadana natural gas pipeline project. A celebration of fiftieth anniversary Independence Day is organized at Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's compound.
- January 6:** The NLD accuses the SPDC of obstructing religious affairs by forcing party members and families to seek permission from the authorities to enter the monkhood, saying that Buddhist members are now required to get permission from the local authorities when they wish to be ordained.
- January 7:** The SPDC warns the NLD to stop issuing statements and seeks to curtail the activities of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
- January 14:** Mr. Fujita Satoris, Manila-based bureau chief of *Mainichi Shimbun* is deported from Burma as an illegal immigrant for not revealing his true occupation to the relevant authorities.
- January 16:** Thailand announces that it will deport about 300,000 illegal immigrants, mostly Burmese; 150,000 from the industrial sector and 150,000 from the non-service sector within three months.
- January 17:** The SPDC-sponsored National Working Committee for Women's Affairs holds its work coordination meeting in Rangoon. Its leadership notes that "... Myanmar women have no need to demand their rights for they can enjoy their rights on equal terms with men....".
- January 20:** The UN special envoy Alvaro de Soto arrives in Burma on a three day visit for talks with SPDC and opposition figures.
- January 21:** Only 19 political prisoners remain in Insein Prison; the rest are transferred to different jails because of the visiting UN envoy.
- January 22:** The UN special envoy to Burma, Mr. de Soto, meets with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and members of the NLD in Rangoon.
- January 23:** Eighteen students are arrested in Rangoon for handing a letter of protest against the military regime to the UN special envoy, Alvaro de Soto.
- January 24:** A Danish group alleges that some 66 per cent of refugees from Burma now living in Thailand have been tortured.
- January 25:** Ten exiled Burmese students are arrested and detained in Bangkok at a meeting with Thai student activists on Ramkhamhaeng University campus.
- February 2:** Thailand and Burma agree to withdraw their troops from the two disputed islands in the Moei River at Mae Sot district. A team of UNHCR officials holds talk with Bangladeshi officials on resuming the repatriation of 21,000 Burmese refugees.
- February 4:** The SPDC lashes out at "certain Western nations" for criticizing its drug

- record, despite what it called its success in restricting the narcotics trade.
- February 5:** The SPDC attacks the US for its condemnation of the country's poor human rights record, saying Washington is using democracy as a weapon against the country.
- February 7:** The SPDC frees Thai prisoners from Burmese jail and sends them home.
- February 9:** Burma claims that Thailand must pay thousands of dollars a day in compensation if the launching of the gas pipeline linking Burma and Thailand is delayed.
- February 12:** The Thai authorities mobilize 1,000 members of their security forces and officials to transfer more than 12,000 Karen refugees from the Salween National Park to a refugee camp in Sop Moei district.
About 100 Karen refugees stage a rally at Mae Yae Hta refugee camp to protest against the Thai government's plan to move four refugee camps.
- February 13:** Recently released Thai prisoners from Rangoon's Insein Prison state that 23 Thai inmates have died there since 1994 because of poor conditions.
- February 14:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi appeals on foreign governments and humanitarian organizations to give priority to aiding refugees who have fled military oppression.
- February 17:** Thailand estimates that it has repatriated around 30,000 illegal foreign workers, predominantly from Burma, in the past three months.
- February 19:** General Than Shwe ends a three-day state visit to the Philippines during which he was dogged by Filipino human rights activists calling for democratic change in Burma.
- February 25:** Four hundred ethnic Shan civilians flee fighting in Burma between SPDC troops and the SSA to Pang Mapha district, Thailand.
- February 26:** The Thai Foreign Ministry lodges a letter of concern with the Burmese embassy over an alleged shooting incident on the Salween River.
- March 1:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi tells *The Nation*, an English language newspaper in Thailand, that she is "keeping all options open" and this includes sharing power with the military junta.
- March 3:** Thailand gives an April 30 deadline for all illegal foreign workers to be repatriated or face eight years imprisonment and a fine.
- March 4:** Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik urges all Norwegian companies to follow voluntarily the appeal from the government to stop all dealings with Burma.
- March 8:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi marks International Women's Day in Burma with a call for equality for women, saying discrimination hurts the human race.
- March 10:** Malaysian Foreign Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi meets Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other top leaders of the NLD for about two hours.
- March 11:** DKBA attacks Huay Kaloke refugee camp torching 1,000 dwellings, killing two and leaving 50 injured. About 8,000 refugees flee in panic.
- March 15:** DKBA fires more than 10 mortar rounds into the Mae La refugee camp in Thailand sheltering 30,000 refugees.
- March 19:** The leader of Burma's ethnic Karen armed group urges the UN to help nearly 100,000 refugees living in fear following recent attacks on camps

- by pro-SPDC armed groups.
- March 22:** SPDC Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt gives the go-ahead to Thai forces to take action against the DKBA if it persists with attacking refugee camps in Thailand. He denied that the SPDC has anything to do with the DKBA.
- March 23:** The Maw Kel refugee camp in Tak province is attacked early in the morning by the DKBA. One refugee was killed, nine others, including four Thai soldiers, were wounded.
- March 25:** The Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai orders all-out retaliation against any intrusion on Thai soil by armed groups from Burma.
- March 27:** The Thai regional office of the UNHCR affirms its willingness to help the Thai Government ease the burden of assisting refugees on the Thai-Burma border.
- March 30:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi strongly criticizes the British Premier Oil investment in Burma, saying its deal with the SPDC “does a great disservice to the cause of democracy” and “contributes to repression in Burma.”
- April 1:** Thailand’s Army Commander-in-Chief Gen. Chettha Tharajaro supports a proposal that the UNHCR take care of Burmese refugees and be responsible for their resettlement in a third country.
- April 14:** Senior General Than Shwe says that the junta will not rule the country forever. “Our armed forces will not take up the responsibilities of the state forever.... It would be improper to do so,” he says.
- April 17:** The SPDC would relinquish power and allow a return to civilian rule once “a strong constitution and strong foundation for democracy” were in place, says the SPDC Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw.
- April 23:** The SPDC expresses worries over prospects for all nations to ensure secure food supplies and food aid as the economic climate worsens and foreign aid declines.
- April 27:** The European Union agrees to extend sanctions on Burma for a further six months. The sanctions, which include a ban on issuing visas to members of the junta, was imposed in 1996.
- April 30:** The SPDC sentences Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw and two others to 10 years imprisonment for assisting a student writing a history of the Burmese student movement. Two female student leaders are given seven year prison terms under the same charge.
- May 1:** Japan demands that the SPDC open a dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and insists that Tokyo’s aid freeze in respect of the SPDC will remain in place.
- May 3:** As part of their annual list of the top ten enemies, the Committee to Protect Journalists names Burma’s Senior General Than Shwe and Indonesia’s President Suharto as the two top enemies of the press in 1998.
- May 5:** Thailand protests to Burma about the shooting of a Thai villager by a Burmese soldier in Thai waters near the disputed area of Mae Nao islet.
- May 6:** The SPDC denies India’s claim that China has built an electronic surveillance base on a Burmese island from where Beijing could monitor Indian defense activities.

- May 9:** The SPDC appoints three civilians as deputy ministers in an attempt by the military to bring more civilian expertise into the government.
- May 11:** Secretary-General of ASEAN, Rodolfo Severiono, visits Burma to discuss the financial crisis in Asia, economic cooperation and development of the Greater Mekong region with Burmese officials.
- May 12:** A senior UN official meets SPDC officials to discuss Government efforts to eradicate opium production, combat drug abuses, cultivate opium-substitute crops and development matters.
- May 13:** The SPDC sentences James Rupert Russell Mawdsley, aged 24, a British-Australian national, convicted of illegal entry and suspected of “terrorist” activities, to five years in prison and a fine of \$ 7,812.
- May 18:** US President Clinton vows to maintain economic sanctions against Burma as long as the Asian nation is guilty of large-scale political repression.
- May 21:** Thai authorities raid the Human Rights Documentation Unit and arrest 16 Burmese dissidents and charge them with illegal entry. Police also seize computers and fax machines.
- May 25:** The SPDC warns the NLD not to celebrate the anniversary of its landslide victory in the 1990 general election.
- May 27:** Several hundred members of the Burmese opposition party gather at the home of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, to commemorate their party’s 1990 election victory. The NLD set a deadline of August 21 for the SPDC to convene parliament based on those election results.
- May 28:** Burmese soldiers take three Thai officials hostage and demand the release of a Burmese man detained for drug trafficking in Thailand.
- May 29:** Japan pledges another two billion yen grant in debt relief to Burma, three months after extending a grant of the same amount to the country.
- June 3:** The authorities in Thailand and the UNHCR agree in principle to expand the UNHCR’s role in assisting Burmese refugees along the Thai-Burma border.
- June 7:** The SPDC warns school teachers to curb alleged attempts by dissidents to spark political unrest in the country’s education system. Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt urges teachers to be aware of “subversive elements” seeking to create disturbances.
- June 8:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi hosts a tea party at her home for women from Asean countries.
- June 9:** During a visit to Beijing by members of the SPDC, the Chinese Defense Minister announces intentions to develop further the friendly relations between the armed forces of China and Burma.
- June 10:** US narcotics control officials announce that drug control efforts have made no real headway in reducing heroin production in Burma.
- June 11:** UNHCR announces that it will be allowed to participate in the administration of all 12 border camps for displaced Burmese as a “co-partner” with Thai authorities.
- June 16:** The SPDC sends reinforcement battalions to the border near the Three Pagodas Pass in an onslaught against the KNU.

- June 19:** Three hundred guests arrive at Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's home to celebrate her fifty-third birthday. They are not prevented from gathering by the military, but are checked by soldiers posted outside her compound.
- June 23:** Classes resume at the Rangoon Institute of Technology after a year and half suspension.
- June 24:** The NLD sends a letter to the ruling military junta demanding that parliament be convened within two months.
- June 26:** Military intelligence officials block students entering Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's compound for a bi-weekly study session. A commander orders military police to hit NLD members. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is slightly injured in the scuffle.
- June 27:** The SPDC begins detaining scores of elected MPs.
- June 30:** The Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pisuwan says ASEAN foreign ministers will try to solve the problem of bringing Burma into the framework of cooperation between ASEAN and the EU.
- July 1:** The NLD sends a letter to the SPDC protesting at the on-going restrictions and arrest of its MPs. The letter says that NLD candidates were made to sign pledges which limited their movements to their respective townships.
- July 2:** UNICEF and its Burmese partner agencies meet in Rangoon to review the implementation the country's program of cooperation for 1996-2000 and the progress made in health and nutrition.
- July 3:** The NLD releases a statement objecting strongly to the treatment of its MPs by the SPDC.
- July 5:** SPDC warns of a possible "head-on collision" with the NLD. A senior official said authorities had clamped down on the NLD as "a preventive measure with a view to avoid unnecessary and unwanted head-on collision, confrontation and instability."
- July 7:** A car carrying NLD leaders, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is prevented from travelling to Min Hla township, Pegu Division, at about 10:20 a.m., near Shwe Mya Yar village 40 miles (about 65 km) from Rangoon. A local official calls in 30 soldiers, who lift the car- with the passengers inside and turn it around in the direction of capital. The NLD leaders remain in their car throughout the night.
- July 8:** The NLD leaders return to Rangoon after the SPDC allows Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to meet Daw Hla Hla Moe, an NLD member.
- July 9:** Thailand expresses concern at developments in Burma and urges restraint in what is seen as a test of the Thais call for "flexible engagement" among ASEAN members.
- July 10:** The SPDC issues a new warning to the opposition that its activities would land its members in trouble.
- July 14:** Lt-Gen. Tin Oo, Secretary 2 of the SPDC, warns against destructive elements who are physically pushing the country into servitude.
- July 19:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and members of her party are stopped by military authorities 32 km from the capital en route to Pantanaw township, Irrawaddy Division, 80 km from the capital, to meet local officials of the NLD. After

stopping the car, the authorities put up barricades to prevent her from proceeding further. Then they make agreements for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to meet Dr. Tin Min Htut, a NLD member of Pantanaw township, at Anyarsuu village. After the meeting, the party returned.

- July 23:** Armed troops surround Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her two drivers about 15 km west of Rangoon. Her car is surrounded by soldiers, sandbags and barbed wire barricades put there by the authorities to prevent her from going to Bassein, 160 km west of Rangoon.
- July 24:** Thailand officially agrees to allow the UNHCR to help tackle the problem of refugees along the Thai-Burma border.
- July 25:** Students take their examinations in the two largest cities, Rangoon and Mandalay.
- July 27:** A SPDC spokesman calls the July 19 and 23 episodes a publicity stunt and says Daw Aung Suu Kyi was being helped by Western embassies.
- July 29:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is dragged back to Rangoon by the military troops after a six-day standoff but vows to keep up efforts to meet her supporters outside the capital. She is led into the back of her car late on July 29 when two female officials enter the vehicle. She is sandwiched between the women as two male officials enter the car and drive her to Rangoon.
- August 4:** Six Nobel Peace laureates urge the SPDC to restore democracy in an appeal published ahead of the tenth anniversary of “8888”, the uprising of August 8, 1988 in Burma.
- August 7:** The Military Intelligence Unit stationed at the residence of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi leaves its post.
- August 9:** Eighteen foreign activists are arrested in Rangoon for distributing goodwill messages commemorating the August 8, 1988 uprising. They include three Thais, six Americans, three Malaysians, three Indonesians, two Filipinos and an Australian.
- August 12:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her party travel peacefully by car to Bassein. The road is blocked at Ayarsuu village, Htantabin township, and they are prevented from proceeding.
- August 14:** The 18 foreign activists are tried under the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act for attempting to incite unrest or disrupt the peace and stability of the State.
- August 18:** The NLD chairman U Aung Shwe announces previously he has met Gen.Khin Nyunt.
- August 20:** French journalist Philippe Grangereau is deported from Burma for entering the country under the pretense of being a tourist.
- August 21:** The NLD says it will convene the parliament elected in 1990.
- August 22:** the SPDC refuses to allow a physician of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to visit and attend her. It also says the NLD’s decision to convene its own parliament is illegal.
- August 24:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi returns home from ending a 13-day standoff, after trying to travel to Bassein.
Up to 150 students stage a demonstration at Hledon junction in Rangoon. Dozens are arrested.

- August 26:** Lt. Col. Hla Min meets 14 foreign military attaches to announce that it will neither allow the convening of Parliament nor enter into talks with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
SPDC closes off Shwe Dagon Pagoda on the tenth anniversary of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's famous speech which drew over 700,000 listeners.
- August 29:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi announces to 500 NLD members gathered at her house that parliament will be convened in September.
The SPDC threatens to dissolve the NLD if it attempts to convene parliament.
- September 1:** Three journalists an Australian, a Canadian and a Japanese are detained in Rangoon, as they prepare to interview opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
- September 2:** Three thousand students at Rangoon Institute of Technology and Rangoon University main campus hold demonstrations. Riot police seal off both campuses. Demands center on freeing student political prisoners and delaying exams. The Rangoon Institute Technology is shut down again by the authorities following the recent re-opening of this campus to arrange examinations.
- September 4:** Two hundred Buddhist monks gather near Phaya-Gyi Kyaung-tite Monastery in Mandalay to protest against the military government. Twelve monks are arrested. Buddhist monks from Zawtika Ywama Kyaungtike Monastery of Monywa township in Upper Burma stage a demonstration. The World Bank cuts financial ties to Burma, saying it will not consider giving the SPDC any more money because it has failed to make repayments on past loans, estimated at US\$ 14 million.
- September 12:** The SPDC arrests another 187 NLD members, bringing the total of 702 arrested since a crackdown began in May.
- September 16:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and nine members of her party form a committee representing the MPs elected in 1990 election.
- September 27:** On the tenth anniversary of the founding of the NLD, a low-key ceremony is held in Rangoon.
- September 30:** Thousands of SPDC supporters rally during the week against the political opposition and demanded the deportation of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
- October 7:** The SPDC announces that 54 people, including 23 NLD members, have been arrested in connection with a "conspiracy" to "incite unrest" by NLD members and students allied with an unnamed foreign organization.
- October 8:** A report by the US Labor Department says that French oil giant Total and the US-owned Unocal appear to have used forced labor in building a petroleum pipeline in Burma.
- October 14:** The UNHCR plans to open office in three Thai provinces, Mae Hong Son, Tak and Kanchanaburi, in an effort to help protect Burmese refugees.
- October 20:** The SPDC urges farmers to boost agricultural production to help other Southeast Asian nations which are facing food shortages.
- October 21:** The NLD accuses the SPDC of detaining elected MPs and forcing them to resign. Nine hundred and eighty-eight of its members, including 203 who

- were elected in the 1990 election, have been detained since May.
- October 22:** The UNHC begins registration of Burmese in Thai border camps under an agreement with the Thai authorities.
- October 27:** Mr. Alvaro de Soto, an assistant to the UN Secretary-General returns to Burma to make a four day visit.
- October 29:** The UN Special Envoy Mr. de Soto meets Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and General Khin Nyunt during his four day visit to Rangoon.
- October 31:** At the United Nations General Assembly, UN Special Rapporteur Rajsoomer Lallah expresses deep concern over continued human rights violations in Burma.
- November 3:** *The Myanmar Morning Post* begins publishing in Rangoon in the Chinese language.
- November 13:** The SPDC admits that the pace of drafting the new constitution is very slow, but says it dare not impose a deadline.
- November 14:** The SPDC announces a major cabinet reshuffle including Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw. Five supreme court judges and two other deputy ministers are granted "permission to retire."
- November 19:** The United Nations General Assembly adopts without a vote a resolution deploring continuing human rights violations in Burma.
- November 20:** The ILO's governing body hears evidence from an ILO commission of inquiry on forced labor in Burma and calles on the SPDC to bring its legislation into line with the ILO convention on forced labor by May 1, 1999.
- November 24:** A spokesman of the SPDC says that opposition members currently detained are "being comfortably housed and well fed and that they are being treated with courtesy and respect."
- November 25:** Burmese troops arrest an American, a Canadian and a German for entering the country illegally via a jungle route from northwestern Thailand.
- December 3:** The SPDC extends a visa ban on Danish government officials, a measure seen as a retaliation to Denmark's support for the extension of collective European visa restrictions on Burmese officials in October.
- December 11:** Singaporean elder statesman Lee Kuan Yew warns that some SPDC leaders may face the same fate as former Chilean dictator Pinochet, fighting extradition in Britain for alleged human rights abuses.
- December 14:** The NLD strongly denounces the practice of the SPDC forcing its members to resign.
- December 15:** The SPDC's Senior General Than Shwe delivers an opening address at the ASEAN summit in Hanoi urging ASEAN not to abandon the group's policy of not interfering in each other's internal affairs.
- December 20:** The Thai Foreign Ministry spokesman Kobsak Chutikul urges the Burmese to prevent fighting from spilling over into Thai territory and violating Thai sovereignty.
- December 24:** Thai Foreign Ministry lodges a strong protest with Rangoon over an attack on a Royal Thai Navy vessel by a Burmese boat off Ranong province, an incident in which two navy personnel were killed.

December 31: The NLD files a criminal complaint against the Director-General of the Military Intelligence Services and SPD Secretary-1 Khin Nyunt. The MI units are held responsible for the illegal arrest and intimidation of NLD members, the NLD says.

Historical Background

Constitutional period (1947-62)

On January 4, 1947, Burma gained its independence from the British who, in the nineteenth century, had fought three wars against the Burman Empire and finally conquered it in 1886. On the eve of the Second World War, the Japanese secretly promised to help Burma recover its freedom by training 30 Burmese youths led by Aung San who then formed the nucleus of a national army. During the war, the Japanese drove the British out of Burma and governed the country directly under military rule until August 1, 1943, when it was granted independence under its protection.

The Burmese army, on March 27, 1945, revolted against the Japanese and joined the Allies. Also during the war period, the leaders of the new Burmese army, together with an underground civilian group, formed a broad anti-Japanese coalition, “the Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League” (AFPFL). The AFPFL and the army were led by General Aung San. On July 19, 1947, General Aung San and some of his colleagues were assassinated while the assembly writing a new constitution was in recess. U Nu, a civilian, was able to lead Burma to gain its independence on January 4, 1948. A parliamentary federal union system was practiced after independence.

Independence did not bring peace and progress to Burma. Within three months of independence, the Communists revolted, taking two army battalions with them. In January 1949, following growing hostility between the Karens and Burmans, the Karens also revolted. Several other ethnic and political groups also took up arms against the state. The multiple insurgencies nearly caused the Union of Burma to collapse. Prime Minister U Nu managed to keep his government in power; it gradually recovered control of the people and territories, though it was unable to bring the wars to an end.

During this tumultuous period, democracy took root and began to grow. However, in 1958, unity among the leaders of the ruling AFPFL dissolved. Prime Minister U Nu proposed that the parliament decide which group should govern the country. U Nu won by such a small margin that within a few months he resigned and recommended that General Ne Win, the head of the army, replace him and conduct new elections.

General Ne Win’s caretaker government, comprising senior military officers, was short-lived; it lasted only 16 months. When the promised elections were held, an U Nu-led faction won. After he resumed leadership, U Nu called a meeting for February 1962; he planned to convene all minority leaders to find a solution to their grievances through peaceful and frank discussions. However, before U Nu could announce his own recommendations for peace, the military, led by General Ne Win, seized power on March 2, 1962. General Ne Win established a Revolutionary Council comprised of 17 senior officers, effectively ending the constitutional period.

Military rule (1962-74)

The Revolutionary Council established a military dictatorship, replacing the parliamentary federal system of the previous constitution. In July 1962, the Revolutionary Council created its own party, the “Burma Socialist Program Party” (BSPP), after having failed to win the backing of the established political parties. The Revolutionary Council published its first ideological statement entitled, “The Burmese Way to Socialism,” at the end of April 1962. A year later, it moved to a policy of rapid nationalization and assumed direct control of the economy. In 1971, the BSPP transformed itself into a civilian government, though it retained the same military rulers, many of whom had retired from the armed forces. In 1974, a new constitution was adopted with additional centralized powers and further entrenched BSPP’s position as the only legal political party in the country.

Military rule (1974-1988)

The second constitution of independent Burma differed markedly from its predecessor. The highest level of government was the *Pyithu Hluttaw* or People’s Assembly, a single chamber legislature. Under the new laws, U Ne Win was selected as President of the country and head of the BSPP. During this period of military rule, the government faced popular unrest with workers staging violent strikes in 1974 and 1975. Students also protested throughout this period; the most serious protest, in 1974, resulted from a struggle between the students and the government over the proper burial of the remains of U Thant, the third Secretary General of the United Nations. Civil wars continued with the military launching regular campaigns against the forces of the ethnic minorities and the Burma Communist Party. Freedom of association, press, and assembly were severely repressed under the one-party government. In 1981, Ne Win abdicated the presidency, but continued to head the BSPP.

In 1987, Ne Win suddenly began criticizing government reporting and management and called for economic reforms. A few weeks later, the government, without warning, demonetized three currency bank-notes and offered no reimbursement. Nearly 70 percent of the currency in circulation became worthless.

In March 1988, students and local people were involved in a fracas at a tea shop; a major brawl ensued. The intervention of riot police led to the death of a student from the Rangoon Institute of Technology (RIT). RIT students began protesting daily. The protest spread to other universities. After twelve days of violent conflicts with police, causing many deaths, the government closed the universities and promised to investigate the student deaths. When the students returned to the universities in June, they demanded an account of the still-missing students and called for the arrest of those responsible for student deaths and injuries. Again, the police and military responded to the student protests with force, killing at least 20 students and arresting hundreds of others. And once again, the universities were closed. The wave of social unrest spread; the resistance movement became stronger as the people called for political change. The military declared martial law.

On July 23, 1988, the BSPP appointed General Sein Lwin as the new party head and later president. A general strike took place on August 8, 1988 and in response to it, the police and army attacked the demonstrators, killing an unknown number, estimated in

thousands.

On August 12, 1988, U Sein Lwin resigned and was replaced by a civilian lawyer, Dr. Maung Maung. During this period, the jails were opened and criminals released, causing fear as crime rose. Rumors were also spread by government agents that the water supply was poisoned and that other heinous acts were being committed.

Peaceful student-led demonstrations were snuffed out on September 18, 1988, as the military staged a bloody coup and established a new dictatorship under martial law, called the “State Law and Order Restoration Council” (SLORC). It brutally put down the popular movement resulting in thousands of deaths and arrests. Many students left the cities and their homes and fled to border areas. The SLORC suspended the 1974 constitution.

SLORC’s military rule (1988-Present)

On September 23, 1988, having established himself as Burma’s leader, General Saw Maung, head of the SLORC, assured the public that the sole aim of his military intervention was to restore law and order, improve the economic condition of the people, and organize multiparty elections as soon as possible. He insisted that it was not his intention to “cling to State power for long.”

Within months, parties began to register while a new election law was drawn up. The National League for Democracy (NLD) quickly emerged as the leading opposition party led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of the national hero General Aung San. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi traveled widely and attracted large crowds, despite the SLORC decrees that public gatherings be limited to four persons. As she gained an ever wider following, the military tried to discredit her for not having “pure” motives, being the wife of a European. SLORC announced that she was being manipulated by Communist members in her party, and that she considered herself above the law when she called meetings in violation of the SLORC decree against public gatherings. Indeed, on July 1989, SLORC placed Daw Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest and disqualified her from participating in the elections. In spite of these tactics, the NLD achieved a stunning victory in the elections, held on May 27, 1990, winning 392 of the 485 seats contested.

Having been rejected at the elections, SLORC began systematically to eliminate its opposition. It refused to allow the Pyithu Hluttaw (parliament) to convene; it then said that the actual purpose of the election was to form a constituent assembly. On July 27, 1990, SLORC promulgated Declaration 1/90 which said, among other things, that “[the SLORC] is not an organization that observes any constitution; it is an organization that is governing the nation under Martial Law.” Following this announcement, SLORC began to arrest and intimidate NLD members as well as members of other opposition parties.

Meanwhile, SLORC continued waging war against the minorities. Having won Thailand’s support by granting timber and fishing concessions in the border area and the along the Tenasserim coast, SLORC was able to mount a major campaign against the Karens and Mons with new weapons purchased from Singapore, China, and Pakistan. The SLORC even crossed the river frontier and launched attacks from Thai territory. During the offensive, the army forced innocent villagers to serve as porters in the war zones and killed many who collapsed from exhaustion or injury.

In 1989, the army achieved an unplanned victory of sorts in the north, along the

Burma-China border. A minority group turned against the Burma Communist Party (BCP), driving its leaders across the border and declaring themselves free and independent of their former BCP leaders. The SLORC quickly entered into agreements with the leaders of the minority BCP cadres in Kokang and the Wa State, promising to allow their former enemies to keep their weapons, retain power in their traditional areas, and pursue local trade (mostly in opium) in exchange for ending their wars against the SLORC and even fighting on SLORC's side against other minorities.

As time progressed, the SLORC persistently refused to allow the newly elected NLD-led parliament to assemble. Some elected MPs fled to liberated areas on the Thai-Burma border. In December 1990, the Parliament met secretly and elected the "National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma" (NCGUB) with the support of all major ethnic groups struggling to assert themselves within Burma.

On April 24, 1992, two years after the elections, SLORC issued Order No. 11/92 entitled "Convening of a National Convention." It indicated that a national convention would be convened "in order to lay down basic principles to draft a firm constitution." In January 1993, the convention finally assembled with 702 delegates, of whom only 106 were elected representatives. The remaining delegates were either hand-picked by the SLORC to "represent" workers, peasants, intellectuals, national races, and service personnel, or were "specially invited persons." The SLORC stated that the convention would only be drawing up the "principles" of a new constitution, and the final draft would still be written, as promised, by the elected representatives. Moreover, SLORC stated, the principles discussed by the delegates had to conform with the "objectives" of the convention, as defined by SLORC, which included the "participation of the *Tatmadaw* (armed forces) in the national political leadership role of the State in the future." Despite repeated calls in UN resolutions for the SLORC to give a timetable for the convention, there is no sign that the convention is near any conclusion.

On July 10, 1995, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was released from almost six years under house arrest. Although her release initially raised hopes for an improvement in the human rights situation in Burma, nothing has changed. Indeed, the pace of political arrests and persecution has accelerated dramatically since November 1995 when the NLD withdrew from the SLORC-controlled national convention due to its undemocratic processes. SLORC responded to the NLD withdrawal by expelling the NLD permanently from the Convention. A call from the NLD to begin a dialogue with the SLORC in order to start a process of national reconciliation has been refused by the SLORC.

Political turmoil in Burma has increased significantly since the NLD announced that it would hold a meeting in late May 1996 to commemorate the sixth anniversary of its 1990 election victory. The SLORC reacted by arresting hundreds of NLD MPs and other supporters in an effort to prevent the meeting. In addition, on June 7, 1996, SLORC issued Law No. 5/96, the sweeping provisions of which allow for up to 20 years imprisonment for anyone who expresses political views publicly.

On November 9, 1996, a group of about 200 young men attacked Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's motorcade with iron bars and sticks. The men were thought to be members of the "Union Solidarity Development Association" (USDA), a SLORC sponsored group. In December 1996, more than 2,000 people, including hundreds of students, involved in peaceful student demonstrations, were arrested for calling for human rights reforms. Public gatherings on weekends in front of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's home have been banned since

the end of 1996. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is repeatedly refused permission to leave her compound, and has been effectively confined to her house for long periods.

Since 1989, the SLORC has sought a military cease-fire with some of the ethnic forces, bringing a kind of peace to the areas under their control. In December 1994, a renewed offensive against the Karen National Union (KNU) was launched following a split within the KNU and the formation of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), which was supported by the SLORC. In February 1995, the KNU retreated from its headquarters in Manerplaw. Since then the offensive has taken a new turn as DKBA and SLORC troops launched the first of several raids into refugee camps in Thailand. DKBA and SLORC troops have had easy access to refugees in Thailand. The raids, which were intended to terrify the refugees into returning to Burma, have continued. The KNU has made several offers to the SLORC to engage in ceasefire talks. However, while there have been meetings between the two sides, there is no sign of any progress.

In the Karenni State, the Karenni Nationalities Progressive Party (KNPP) signed a ceasefire agreement at a ceremony in Loikaw in March 1995. In June, the KNPP issued a statement claiming that the SLORC had broken the terms of the agreement. Intermittent fighting continues between the SLORC troops and the KNPP in Karenni State. SLORC undertook massive relocation operations in Karenni State, Shan State, and Tenasserim division during 1995 and 1996, causing a mass influx of refugees into Thailand.

In mid-February 1997, SLORC launched two new major offensives against the KNU. SLORC's 1997 offensive against the KNU has resulted in more than 7,000 new refugees entering Thailand.

In November 15, 1997, the SLORC was renamed the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). Although the three most senior members of the regime retained their posts in the SPDC, 14 former members – all senior military officers – were moved to a four - member advisory group. In late November three members of this advisory group were placed under house arrest. The three were former tourism minister, Lieutenant-General Kyaw Ba; the ex-commerce minister, Lieutenant-General Tun Kyi; and the former agriculture minister, Lieutenant-General Myint Aung. A number of their aides and staff at other ministries were also placed under investigation. Following the detention, the advisory group was dissolved on December 10, 1997, less than one month after its formation. Officials said the members of the advisory group no longer held their military posts. The changes did not stop there. On December 20, there was an unexpected reshuffle of the second tier of the military regime, the cabinet. Another eight posts in the cabinet were reshuffled and one new member was added to the cabinet.

Although the main impetus behind recent changes has been to improve the regime's image, many see the moves as cosmetic attempts to quell international criticism.

On December 12, 1997, five members of the NLD Central Executive Committee met the SLORC Minister for Home Affairs, Colonel Tin Hlaing, at the invitation of the regime. The delegation did not include Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, or the NLD chairman U Aung Shwe. Colonel Tin Hlaing asked the NLD to stop issuing statements and to discontinue party organizational activities, such as efforts by Aung San Suu Kyi to attend party meetings in order to reorganize the youth wing of the party. Later, the official press of the regime reported that, unless these demands were met, moves towards a dialogue would slow even further. In a statement issued after the meeting, the NLD said that, as a legal political party, it was entitled to continue with such activities.

**Message of
Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Laureate
General Secretary, National League for Democracy, Burma
to the 55th Session of
the United Nations Commission on Human Rights
Geneva 1999**

The last year has been a particularly challenging period for those of us in Burma working for democracy and human rights. The repression of the military regime worsened greatly after May 1998 when the National League for Democracy declared its intention to call for the convening of Parliament, the Parliament that was elected in May 1990.

During the last eight or nine months many members of the National League for Democracy have been detained. Well, “detained” is the euphemism used by the authorities for what we see as unlawful arrest. In addition, more than 150 members of parliament still remain under detention, some of them have been forced to resign by the military regime. There are others who have been released because their health had deteriorated badly during their time of detention. A number of working committees of the National League for Democracy were demolished by the authorities throughout the country and of course, many of our active members were forced to resign.

The repression is on a very large scale but the world has not grasped the extent of the repression because it was spread out over a number of months. If what the military regime had done over the last eight or nine months had been carried out, say within a matter of weeks, then I think the world would have sat up and taken notice.

As it is, what we have suffered over the last year is far more than what we have suffered over the last six or seven years. So we would like the international community to be aware of the fact that the human rights situation in Burma has deteriorated very badly indeed.

It has come to the point when the activities of the regime are tantamount to criminal activities. The National League for Democracy has been forced to take action under the law. We have filed suits against the home ministry and against the military intelligence because of the criminal activities conducted against the members of our party. But, as might be expected the authorities have taken no action whatsoever. Our law suits remain somewhere in the hands of the legal authorities and there seems to be no intention on the part of the military regime to correct the injustices that have been done to our party.

We are aware that the international community sympathizes with our situation and we are very grateful for all the help that has been given to us, but there is a necessity for constant

vigilance and there is a need for continued action on the part of the international community to ensure that the human rights situation in Burma does not deteriorate further.

We hope very much that at this session of the Human Rights Commission a firm resolution will come out which will protect the basic rights of the people of Burma.

What we need now is more than just mere words. We need concrete action because our people are suffering not just from an onslaught of words but from the deprivation of basic justice in our country.

Thank you very much.

Question and Answer Section:

Q: How has the party been affected by the crackdown?

Now about 150 Members of Parliament remain under detention, and we think about three or four hundred ordinary members of the party.

It is a little difficult to keep track about who has been arrested and who has been released because a lot of the people who have been released were released with the understanding that they should not get in touch with the party again. so we are not always aware of who has been released.

Also, a number of those who have been taken into detention have been put into prison without trial and of course we have not contact with them.

Well, the authorities say that these people are not under detention, that they have “invited them to have discussions” so it’s difficult to take action under the law, although of course, technically it comes under the section of illegal restraint. So we could, in a country where there is rule of law, take action against the authorities.

It has slowed down the party’s work to a certain extent, but not too much. We are used to struggle we are used to working under very hard circumstances and for us, well, it’s part of the job, as it were.

Q: Do people see political participation as a human right?

You know, I think there are many people in Burma who do not even know there such things as basic human rights. We are trying to teach them.

I think at one point a few years ago, the military regime undertook to spread the word, as it were, in Burma. I think they made some sort of undertaking to the United Nations that they would make the Universal Declaration of Human Rights universally available but they have not done so. We have tried to distribute as many copies as we can of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and those members of our party who are in constant touch with us do know that these rights exist and are aware of the 30 articles in the Declaration ... but I think the great majority of people in Burma have very little inkling of what the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is.

So to think of political participation as a human right is a big step but I think by instinct they know that they should have a right to act according to their beliefs. There are very strong feelings against this regime. The people are aware that there is gross injustice going on in this country and even if they have never heard of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights their human instinct tells them that they have a right to a certain amount of human dignity.

Q: Are people living in fear?

There is a lot of fear in Burma. Don't forget that the military regime first came to power in 1958 and after couple of years we had a democratic government for a bit and then in 1962 the military regime took over again, and since then they have lived under a very repressive dictatorship.

And in this sort of climate ... fear is a natural reaction. One of the basic things we try to teach our people is that they must question, they must have the intelligence and courage to raise questions, such as: If a member of the military intelligence walks into your house in the middle of the night, you have right to ask him whether this is an act which is acceptable under the law. Do they have an arrest warrant? Do they have the right to just come into somebody's house in the middle of the night and yank people out of their beds and start questioning them and harassing them? The simple questions as to what their rights are - these are the ones we want our people to ask, but even that takes some training.

Even if they do not know that a member of the military intelligence walking into their house in the middle of the night without a warrant is illegal, they do know there is something unjust about it, there is something wrong about it. They do know that people should have the right to sleep soundly in their beds without fear.

Q: Are children's rights recognized?

The military regime signed this convention on children's rights but I do not think they have taken any concrete action.

We run a little health clinic, not exactly a health clinic, just one day a week, we give out multivitamins, iodized salt and sugar to poor children. And if you look at those children you can be sure that the rights of children are not protected in this country. Some of them are so badly malnourished that you would imagine they came from one of those disaster areas where there has been a famine, and this is in the centre of Rangoon.

And there are many who cannot afford to go to school and sometimes I ask the children "do you go to school" and it's sad because some of the children are ashamed because they can't go to school so they say "yes". But if you ask their mothers they will say "no, we used to send the children to school but now we can't because we cannot afford it". You know that the number of children who cannot go to school has risen in Burma. I should say percentage because if course the increasing population may increase the numbers and not necessarily the percentage but in Burma the percentage of children who cannot go to school has risen and the percentage of children who cannot complete primary school has risen over the last decade.

Q: Is child labour still occurring?

Yes, but I think it is getting increasingly difficult for children to find work because even adults are facing unemployment. There was a construction boom a few years back and this boom has now died down. During the time of the construction boom, you would find many children working on these construction sites. But now even adults have difficulty finding jobs so I think children are finding it even more difficult to find work.

Q: What about laws protecting women & children?

It's a little unrealistic to talk about laws in this country, where there is no rule of law. Some of the laws look very beautiful written down but they don't apply to the ordinary people in this country and they apply even less to those who are involved in politics, to those who are working for democracy.

Q: What is the situation of women?

... certainly in Burma, as in many, many countries in the world, not just in the east, women are still second class citizens, they are still less privileged than men.

It is universally accepted now that whenever a country suffers economically, it's the women and children who suffer most and this is true for Burma as well.

There is a lot of prostitution going on and I believe one of the social problems is that now a lot of young girls who are not particularly starving are going in for prostitution because of this need to keep up with what they see as common day needs. It's partly to do, I think, with the advertising on television. You know what the advertisements are like ... all the models look glossy and they all wear very smart clothes and they always seem to live in luxury homes and I think this raises the expectations of young people ... apart from the problem of those who have to go in for work like prostitution because they are actually starving and there is no other way they can earn a living.

As I understand it is because of the spread of HIV in this part of the world there is a greater and greater demand for child prostitutes and with the poverty of the families combined with this demand, it cannot be a good thing.



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1. Extra-judicial Killing, Summary, and Arbitrary Executions

1.1 Background

The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has continued to ignore its pledge to honor the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 3 that says “Everyone has the rights to life, liberty, and security of person”. Extrajudicial executions violate the right to life, as guaranteed in Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The security forces justify extrajudicial executions as distinguished from justifiable killings, on the grounds of self-defense, the result of using reasonable force in law enforcement, and the imposition of the death penalty. The frequent and well-documented reports of arbitrary and summary killings of unarmed civilian and ethnic people by members of SPDC’s army, under a variety of circumstances, point to the military junta’s complete disregard for the human rights and the humanitarian law treaties it has signed.

SPDC’s arbitrary executions take place anywhere and at any time, by officers as well as rank and file soldiers. The killing of civilians by SPDC soldiers, particularly in areas dominated by ethnic groups, were documented in 1998, despite intermittent ceasefires that interrupted the long-standing insurgencies in these areas. The worst and most brutal killing by SPDC soldiers occurs in areas that essentially have been zones of armed conflict for decades. In these war zone areas, villagers are sometimes arrested and tortured to death or summarily executed, usually by being beaten to death or stabbed with knives, on suspicion of helping the armed groups in any way, acting as the local village liaison with the armed groups, or being a relative of an ethnic armed group member. Almost all of such allegations are untrue. Sometimes, the villagers are accused because of a personal grudge, or another villager gives their names while under extreme torture simply to escape further pain.

Whenever SPDC troops are engaged in offensive operation, such as forced relocations and the burning of villages, the frequency of random killings under torture can be expected to increase. Only the villagers who are lucky enough to run away will be able to save their lives.

Summary killing also takes place in the course of capturing villagers for the purpose of forced labor and portering. When porters try to escape or can no longer work due to excessive exhaustion or illness, they are nearly always beaten and often killed or abandoned without food and medicine. Women are commonly killed by soldiers after being raped, for fear that victims of these double crimes will report or publicize the sexual assaults.

Arbitrary execution includes prisoners being tortured to death while in custody, beating, denial of adequate food and medical care, and subhuman conditions in prisons.

12 Death in custody

U Thein Tin

U Thein Tin, a prominent member of the Rangoon Township Organizing Committee of the NLD, died at Rangoon General Hospital on the evening of February 18, 1998, following physical and mental torture in Insein Prison. He had been detained in Insein Special Prison since March 1996 along with well-known leaders such as U Moe Thu, U Kyaw Min and U Soe Thein. He was charged under Section 10(a) of the State Protection Act, which is designed “to protect the country from the dangers of those who wish to harm the state.” U Thein Tin, a writer by profession, was a former student leader in 1962. He came to prominence in the NLD during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s house arrest for his management skills. (*Source: ABSDF*)

Aung Kyaw Moe

Aung Kyaw Moe, aged 29, a former student of the Rangoon Institute of Technology, who had been sentenced to 14 years imprisonment for his involvement in a December 1996 student demonstration, died in the prison hospital on May 23, 1998. He died after being beaten by prison authorities following a hunger strike by political prisoners at the Thayawaddy Prison, 200 km north of Rangoon. On May 22, political prisoners in Thayawaddy Prison staged a hunger strike to mark the eighth anniversary of the 1990 elections, in which the NLD had won a landslide victory. The political prisoners made demands: that the ruling SPDC treat them as political prisoners, and that it enter into a dialogue with the NLD to solve the country’s problems peacefully. However, the authorities, under instructions from the SPDC’s Ministry of Home Affairs, rejected their demands and warned the prisoners to stop their hunger strike immediately. When they refused to do so, eight political prisoners were beaten and seriously injured. Afterwards, the family members of all the political prisoners at Tharawaddy Prison were forbidden to make visits in an attempt by the authorities to prevent the news about the incident from spreading. (*Source: ABSDF*)

U Saw Win

The National League for Democracy (NLD) representative U Saw Win, who was elected to parliament in the 1990 election, died on August 7, 1998, from unknown causes in Thayawaddy Prison, 200 km north of Rangoon. U Saw Win (aka U Kyaw Zaw Lin) was from Htilin township and was 61 years old. He was arrested in 1991 for allegedly failing to transport logs in time while working on the construction of the Rangoon-Thanlyin Bridge. He was condemned to given ten years imprisonment under the Public Property Protection Act and an additional one year imprisonment under Section 5(j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act.

The Election Commission dismissed U Saw Win as a Member of Parliament on December 12, 1991. The military regime twice promised to release U Saw Win from prison, once in 1992 and again in 1995, but failed to do so.

U Saw Win graduated in science from Rangoon University and in 1965 began working as a journalist with a newspaper. He later became an assistant editor at the *Botahtaung* newspaper and also worked for a government publishing house.

U Saw Win's body was cremated in secret by military authorities two days after his death on August 9, without the knowledge or presence of his family.

U Saw Win is the third NLD Member of Parliament to die in prison. U Tin Maung Win (Rangoon Division) died in 1991 and U Hla Than (Rangoon Division) died in 1996. U Saw Win's death also comes six months after the death in prison of the Rangoon NLD Organizing Committee member U Thein Tin. (*Source: ABSDF*)

U Aung Min

U Aung Min, age 53, a member of the organizing committee of Mandalay Northeast township, Mandalay Division, died on October 21, 1998 while he was under detention at the IB 95 based in Mandalay. He was also in charge of Mandalay Division NLD office, joint secretary of the Northeast township and chairman of Mawra Gewa ward. A statement issued by the SPDC said U Aung Min had suffered from cancer of the lymph glands which had spread all over his body in a Defence Services Hospital in Mandalay. He was arrested by the Military Intelligence and imprisoned at the IB 95 in September 1998. No family visit was allowed during his detention. He became ill while in custody but refused medicine offered to him by the arresting authorities. Dr. Htay Hlaing, another NLD member, who was his companion in custody requested medical treatment for U Aung Min. The doctor was himself unwell and had no medical facilities to enable him to attend to U Aung Min's needs. On October 21, his wife, Daw Thwe Thwe San, was informed by the same MI officers that U Aung Min died in the evening of October 21. His body was cremated at the Kyanikan cemetery on October 23. His family was given three sacks of rice and one tin of cooking oil as a donation by the IB 95, but they rejected whatever assistance was offered to them by the military. (*Source: HRDU*)

13 Lists of incidents

◆ In mid January 1998, U Ein Kyin, 54 year old male from Tavoy, Tenasserim Division, was beaten with rifle butts and burnt alive when he was unable to continue acting as a porter. He was taken as porter with 200 other male porters for the column of LIB 5 under the command of Division 66. He was forced to carry loads between Myitta village and Thai-Burma border several times for the military. He was beaten by the soldiers from LIB 5 before being killed. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On January 21, 1998, a military column led by Major Than Soe of LIB 357 came to Kote Uaung village of Wun Yay township, Karen State, and tortured by various means villager Saw Per Dee and on January 29, Meh Kapa villager U Kauk Pe, aged 58. Both were later shot dead by the troops. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On January 29, 1998, troops from LIB 12 came to Tee Klot Kee village in Belin township, Mon State, and arrested Saw Por Nyo, a 25 year old male. The troops took him away and later executed him without giving any reason. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On February 2, 1998, troops of DKBA shot dead two villagers of Per Le-o-Doe village in Papun district, Karen State. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On February 3, 1998, a combined column of LIB 96 and the Anti-Insurgent Unit opened fire on Doh Kee village, in Nyaunglaybin township, Pegu Division, killing Naw Khee Lar Paw, a 16 year old Karen girl. The soldiers cut the ears and a finger of the dead

girl to take a pair of earrings and a ring. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On February 5, 1998, troops from IB 39 came to Kawtupoe village of Htantabin township, Pegu Division, and seized a pastor, Maung Ohn Kyi, and his son-in-law, Saw Tar Yee Yi, aged 36. The troops tortured them by various means and finally shot them dead. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On February 7, 1998, four members of the People's Militia (an Anti-Insurgency Group) from Myee Khan Baw village, Tavoy township, Tenasserim Division, were killed by the soldiers from a joint military column of IB 25 and 280. They were accused of having connections with the KNU soldiers in the region. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On February 8, 1998, 50 soldiers led by Captain Aye Win from IB 65 found a group of villagers clearing forest at a place three miles south of Nawng Leng village, Murng Nai township, Shan State. Without asking any questions or giving any warning, the troops opened fire on the villagers and killed Loong Kaw Ka, aged 50, Loong Aw, aged 56, Loong Leng, aged 53, Loong Hawn, aged 50, Sai Mala, aged 47, Sai Tawna, aged 45, Sai Awng La, aged 43, Sai Wi Zig Ta, aged 41, Sai Saw Nanda, aged 38, Sai Ya Zing Ta, aged 26, Nang Non Zing, a female aged 35, Nang Harn, a female aged 32, Nang Poi, female aged 30, Nang Lu, a female aged 25, and Nang La, a female aged 23. They all were from Nawng Ken village. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On February 9, 1998, troops from LIB 513 surrounded a Buddhist monastery where villagers were conducting religious funeral rites at Luk Mawn village, Murng Kerng township, Shan State, and opened fire into a crowd at random. One villager named Kuna, aged 35, was killed. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On February 26, 1998, a military column from LIB 102 came to Nokaneh village in Thaton district, Mon State, and shot dead a man, Saw San Aye, 43 without reason. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ In mid-March, 1998, Kyaw Thein, a 30 year old male from Pon Kyun ward, Tavoy, Tenasserim Division, and two other unknown porters from Heinza and Maungmakan villages were shot to dead by soldiers from LIB 5 when they were unable to continue acting as porters, due to exhaustion. They were forcibly recruited with 200 other male porters for the column of LIB 5 under the command of Division 66. They were forced to carry loads between Myitta village and Thai-Burma border several times for the military. They were killed between Amala village and Amalakhee village near the Thai border. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On March 5, 1998, the troops came to Paklu village of Pa-an township, Karen State, and shot dead a villager, Saw Kulu, without reason. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On March 9, 1998, an army truck from LIB 709 carrying food supplies overturned near Khu Ler Doe village, Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and most of the supplies were damaged. For that reason, Saw Maung Nge, aged 45, from Khu Ler Doe village, was arrested by the LIB 709 and later shot dead. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On March 25, 1998, two columns from IB 59 shot and killed the villagers from Say Law Klo Tu, Kyaukkyi township, Karen State, while they were fishing in the river. Villagers who were killed included Saw Yeh Khine, aged 40 from Kadu Mu Doe village, Naw Moory Paw, aged 10, from Kadu Mu Doe village and Saw Pa Dee, aged 40, from Ler Ha village. Those wounded were Naw Bwch Pu, aged 18, and Naw Law Tu, aged 25, from Ler Ha village. (*Source: KIC*)

- ◆ On March 25, 1998, troops from IB 59 shot at the villagers from Kadu Mu Deh village, Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division, who were fishing in the stream near their village. Five villagers died, namely Daw Mu Kapaw, aged 10, Saw Mikekha, aged 38, Saw Shwe Patee, aged 48, Saw Thein Shwe, aged 38, and Saw Moree Hel, aged 30. Two other women were wounded, but escaped. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On March 25, 1998, troops from LIB 703, column 2, shot and killed Saw Hla Kyi from Thay Baw Kho village in Nyaunglebin district, Pegu Division, without giving any reason. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On March 27, 1998, troops from LIB 703 entered Ka Pa Hta village and burnt down two houses. They also shot dead the villager Saw Tee Kree for no reason. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On April 4, 1998, troops from Laikha-based LIB 515 led by Captain Soe Min Oo shot dead Sai Aw, from Kho Pek village, Nang Thuay from Wan Tham village, Nang Suay, aged 16, from Nar Ping village, Sai Sala, aged 28, from Wan Huay village and Sai Karng, aged 40, from Kun Tawmaw village, Ho Pong township, Shan State. (**Source: SHRF**)
- ◆ On April 11, 1998, Saw Phar Kyar, a villager from Khwee Lay village, Belin township, Mon State, was rounded up by the troops from IB 51 and later killed. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On April 12, 1998, a joint military column of IB 30, 59 and LIB 349 burnt YeMu Plaw village, Papun district, Karen State. Saw Bwe Bu, aged 80, and Saw Maw Htoo, aged 70, were burnt alive as they were not able to run away. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On April 12, 1998, Sai Mukuta, aged 35, and his nephew, aged 16, from Quarter No. 3 of Kun Hing towns, Shan State, were killed by the SPDC troops while they were collecting leaves for wrapping traditional sweets during the water festival. The troops accused them of being intelligence agents of the ethnic armed forces. (**Source: SHRF**)
- ◆ On April 18, 1998, a military column from IB 285 led by Commander Aung Lay Oo entered Nya Saw village, Mergui district, Tenasserim Division, and shot dead Pah Lin Nay, aged 43, without reason. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On April 21, 1998, troops from IB 62 arrested and killed Saw Sha Moe Aye La, aged 30, from Kla Hta village, Papun district, Karen State. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On April 27, 1998, soldiers from IB 257 led by Lt-Col. Aike Maw entered The Kaw Hta village, Ye township, Mon State. The soldiers looted two gold necklaces, two watches and two earrings from Ma Ohn Pwint who was seven months pregnant and later killed her. (**Source: Yoma 3**)
- ◆ On May 3, 1998, troops from LIB 707 shot and killed Saw Pler Wah, aged 46, a villager of Lar Err village, Papun district, Karen State and looted 300 *baht* from him. They also arrested his wife and children after forcing them out of their home. After a while they were able to escape. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On May 4, 1998, Saw Plawa, aged 46, from La Ell Deh village, Papun district, Karen State, was killed by the troops from LIB 703. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On May 5, 1998, 36 villagers, 25 men and 11 women were shot dead by 70 to 80 SPDC troops of LIB 44 led by Commander Naing Maung. The villagers had been caught in their fields in Nawng Kwai Nai Loi, in Nam Zarng township, Shan State. They were killed despite the fact they had received permission from the SPDC authorities in the relocation site of Kho Lam to return to farm their fields. (**Source: SHRF**)

- ◆ On May 5, 1998, troops from LIB 703 looted 400 *baht* from Zaw Htee, a villager from Lemay Kyo village, Papun district, Karen State, and later killed her. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On May 5, 1998, troops from LIB 703 shot and killed Naw Htee Tha, aged 39, from Ler Pay Kyo village, Papun district, Karen State. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On May 5, 1998, troops from IB 703 shot and killed Naw Htee, aged 39, from Ler Pay Kyo village, Papun district, Karen State, without any reason. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On May 6, 1998, a combined force of LIB 704 and LIB 706 entered Htee Bway Khee area, Papun district, Karen State. They shot and killed Saw Hsaw Pah Wah, Naw Thoo Pa and Saw Nyar Bwe Say; all were villagers from Saw Mu Plaw village. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On May 13, 1998, troops from LIB 547 led by Major Tun Tun came to Nokha Loti village in Kya-in-seik-kyi township, Karen State and shot dead Saw Naw Didi, aged 30, a Karen villager. (**Source: MIS**)
- ◆ On May 13, 1998, the combined troops of LIB 704 and LIB 706 entered Kay Pu area, Papun district, Karen State, and destroyed 53 farm huts in this area. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On May 15, 1998, Naw Htee Moo and her daughter Naw Say Heh Po of Kler Po village, Mergui district and Naw Heh Su of Wa Suko village in Tavoy township, Tenasserim Division, were killed by SPDC troops without reason. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On May 17, 1998, troops from LIB 537 came into Lamaing, Pon Kyaw and Meta Bwi villages in Kya-in-seik-kyi township, Karen State, and forcibly took away Saw Khu, Hpar Tayu, Hpar Palwe, Saw Mya Thein, Nya Hsu, Shwe Thay, Nea Kyaw Pe, Hla Shwe, Letha, Pa Ea and two others. They all were accused of being KNU supporters. Four were killed later and the fate of rest is not yet known. (**Source: MIS**)
- ◆ On May 18, 1998, troops from IB 231 led by Major Than Sein arrested and killed Karen villager Saw Htoo Lay, aged 31, from Mata Kheleh village in Kya-in-seik-kyi township, Karen State. He was accused of being a KNU supporter. (**Source: MIS**)
- ◆ On the evening of May 27, 1998, five civilian porters from Oak Tu village, Thayet Chaung township, Tenasserim Division, were stabbed to death while they were acting as unpaid porters for the military column of IB 104 led by Lt-Col. Thein Htay. They were U Thet, aged 50, U Soe Maung, aged 43, U Toe Nyunt, aged 48, U Phasu, aged 45 and U Chit Sein, aged 52. The soldiers in the column stabbed them when they were physically unable to carry on acting as porters after three days. (**Source: HRDU**)
- ◆ On June 1, 1998, a military column from IB 20 led by commander Myo Win Oo, came to Maw Ku Doe village of Thantaung township, Pegu Division. They shot dead Saw See Ro, a male aged 35 and Nata Kwee, a female, without reason. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On June 2, 1998, 28 villagers, 19 men and nine women, were killed by the troops from Murng Sert-based LIB 333 led by Captain Tin Maung on the bank of the Salween River at the mouth of the Nam Sim tributary. The villagers had been relocated from Wan Kyawn, Murng Paeng township, Shan State, and were heading south in search of food. They were accused of being Shan armed forces, tied up and beaten. Then they were all shot dead. (**Source: SHRF**)
- ◆ On June 2, 1998, 26 villagers, 18 men and eight women, were killed by the troops from IB 227 led by commander Win Maung, about five miles from Murng Kerng town, Shan State. They were from the Murng Kerng relocation site, who had permission from the commander of LIB 514 to return to work in their fields outside. They were caught on

their way and killed. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On June 4, 1998, three Karen family members from Nyaungdon village, Tavoy township, Tenasserim Division, were beheaded by the People's Militia based in Myee Khan Baw village, Tavoy township. These militias were founded and armed by the SPDC troops. All the bodies were dumped into a well. (**Source: ABSDF**)

◆ On June 3, 1998, a column from IB 20, led by battalion second commander, Hla Oo, came to Htaw Lu Doe village in Taungoo district, Karen State and shot dead a villager Saw Kaw Thoo Lei without any reason. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On June 24, 1998, troops from Column (1) of IB 59, entered Kawhsawta village in Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and shot at the villagers at random. Saw May Thet, aged 45, and his son, Saw Lerwa, aged 18, were killed in the shooting. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On June 24, 1998, troops from LIB 51 killed Aike Pun, Aike Moon, Aike Noot and Htoo Rei from Pule village, Phasaung township, Karenni State, for allegedly having communication with armed insurgent groups. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On June 27, 1998, troops from LIB 513 shot dead Loong Ku, aged 45, of Wan Paw village, Kaw Kham, aged 30, of Pa Karng, Ai Man, aged 35, of Pa Karng village, and Loong Pan, aged 45, of Wan Nim village. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On June 27, 1998, 13 villagers, including two women and seven children, were killed by the troops from LIB 245 led by commander Htoo Nyein. The villagers were from Nong Tao village, Mung Nai township, Shan State, and had been rounded up working in their fields. Troops captured the villagers and shot and killed all of them immediately, including a one-year-old baby. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On July 5, 1998, Maung Lay, a villager from Yebon village, Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division, was shot dead by the troops led by Captain Aung Kyaw Myint from LIB 401. His body was not allowed to be taken back to the village for cremation. (**Source: Yoma 3**)

◆ On July 13, 1998, Nang Thuay, a housewife from Nam Yur mu village, Loilem township, Shan State, was burnt to death by the troops from LIB 517. Her 8-month-old baby and her husband, Sarng Ti, aged 35, were also killed by the same troops. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On July 15, 1998, Kyaw Naing, a 23-year-old Chin Christian man from Kuanchawngwah village of Paletwa township, was shot dead on the spot by the SPDC soldiers. He was shot without reason when he and his friends met the soldiers when they were coming back from hunting. His friends luckily escaped unharmed. (**Source: CHRO**)

◆ On August 1, 1998, troops from LIB 513 led by Captain Kuma shot dead Sarng Lu, of Sa Nin village, Loilem township, Shan State. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On August 4, 1998, troops from IB 55 led by Captain Thein Soe from Laikha shot dead Sai La Awng at a farm, northeast of Mung Kerng town, Shan State. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On August 8, 1998, about 70 to 80 soldiers from IB 247 shot Wi Lasa, aged 45, Awng Sa, aged 37, and Sai par, aged 30, from Kholam relocation site, Namg Zarng township, Shan State. They went outside the camp to return to their deserted village to collect the cows they left behind. The soldiers accused them of being part of a Shan armed group and killed them, even though they showed the passes issued by the camp authorities. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On August 19, 1998, troops from IB 64 in Laikha, Shan State, shot dead Sang

Suay, aged 17, and Sang Sa, aged 17, from Tawng Larn village, Sang Mawng, aged 18, from Wan Parn village, and Sang Khin, aged 16, from Parn Poi Zar village. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On August 25, 1998, Saw Baw Kaw, 37 years old and Saw Boke, 35 years old, villagers from Karen Shut Tabin village in Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division, were killed by the LIB 403. Both had come back from Thailand after seeing their relatives in a refugee camp. They were taken on August 24 as soon as they arrived back in their village and on the next day they were killed. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On August 27, 1998, troops from LIB 502 led by Major Maung Aung shot dead Loong Panta, aged 42, Pa Zarn, aged 39, Sai Lon, age 20, and Nang Poi, aged 17, all in the same family at a farm near Wor Tawng village, Holin tract, Murng Pan township, Shan State. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On September 4, 1998, about 100 SPDC troops from LIB 5151 led by Major Soe Phyu shot dead Loong Su, headman of Kard Lur track, Sai Seng, headman of Wang Heng village, Nang Non Hawn, from Ton Hoong village, and Nang Naw from Nam Naw village. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On September 7, 1998, a peasant family of six, including seven and eleven-year-old children, were shot dead at a farm near Murng Kerng village, Murng Kerng township, Shan State, by troops led by Commander Myint Lwin. They were originally from Loi Pha village. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On September 10, 1998, 13 villagers were shot dead at Wan Lao village, Kun Hing township, Shan State, by troops led by Major Maung Thein from IB 62. They were trying to escape when the troops burst into the village. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On September 11, 1998, Loon Saw Nanta, aged 49, who was serving as a porter for column from IB 247, was beaten to death in a monastery compound at Wan Kard village, Murng Nai township, Shan State, because he was exhausted and unable to continue acting as a porter. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On September 20, 1998, troops from LIB 342 and LIB. 432 came to Pawa Htawma village in Tavoy district, Tenasserim Division, and killed Saw Po Ku, aged 22, from Pawa Htawma village, Saw Kyaw Aye, aged 22, from Pawani village and an unknown villager from Pa Pyet Chaw village. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On September 21, 1998, a combined force of SPDC IB 96 led by company commander Myo Aung and DKBA troops, led by Maung Than Bya, came into Khor Htee Khee village, Thaton district, Mon State, and arrested Saw Be. The troops took him as a guide with them and killed him when they arrived to Noh Khay Pu village, without giving any reason. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On September 23, 1998, troops from IB 234 came to Peh Kaw Doe village, Thandaung township, Pegu Division, and killed Saw Ba Chit, aged 60, in his orchard without any reason. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On September 24, 1998, troops from LIB 347 shot and killed Saw Keh Maung, aged 50, in his paddy hut without any reason. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On October 9, 1998, troops from LIB 341 led by Commander Myint Oo went into Kwee Dalataw village in eastern part of Papun district, Karen State, and killed Saw Htoo Wah, aged 32, a trader. They took away 1.2 million *kyat* from him. The troops also arrested Saw Po Patheth, aged 32, took him away from the village and later shot him dead. (**Source: KIC**)

- ◆ On October 10, 1998, troops from SPDC came into Wee Loto Hta village, Papun district, Karen State, and killed Saw Htoo, aged 15, without reason. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On October 13, 1998, soldiers from IB 59 led by division commander Captain Maung Maung Toe, arrived at Aung Chan Tha village in Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division. The soldiers surrounded the house of Daw Hla Myint, 45 years old and ordered her and her niece named Ah Nyo, 15 years old to come out. Both were taken outside the village and shot in the head. They died immediately. (**Source: HRDU**)
- ◆ On October 13, 1998, a military division from IB 73 led by battalion commander Lt-Col. San Myint Oo arrived at Nawlino village near Kyaukpya village, Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division. The soldiers shot at random at the villagers working in their fields Saw Ke Taral and Saw To Kee Too were seriously wounded. Saw Jimmy was arrested and has disappeared since then. He is assumed to have died in the hands of the military. (**Source: HRDU**)
- ◆ On October 14, 1998, a column of special forces led by Captain Maung Maung, composed of the selected soldiers from IB 60, IB 48, IB 59, IB 53, IB 73 and LIB 351 under the SPDC Northern Military Command, shelled 79 mm mortars into Thit Cha Seik village and Tai Pin village in Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division. The shelling killed, Naw Mee Lay, a 13 year old girl and Naw Dada, an 8-year-old girl. (**Source: HRDU**)
- ◆ On October 19, 1998, SPDC troops captured Saw Mya May from Der Doe village, and Saw Palet from Saw Mudoe village, Taungoo district, Karen State. They were later killed by the troops for no reason any reason. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On October 20, 1998, troops from IB 26 shot and killed Thi Lay Pah from Saw Mudoe village, Taungoo district, Pegu Division, without reason. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On October 22, 1998, a column of special forces composed of selected soldiers from IB 60, IB 48, IB 59, IB 53, IB 73 and LIB 351 under the SPDC Northern Military Command, led by deputy leader Captain Kyan Bu found in their farm huts four Karen villagers from Htar Ni Gone village, Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division. They were Saw Lay Hel, 45, Saw Sa Bwe, 23, Saw Maung Nyunt Pho, 27, Saw Pho Saw Kae, 20. They were all shot dead by the soldiers. (**Source: HRDU**)
- ◆ On October 24, 1998, LIB 369 column 2 entered Htee Kaw Way Hta village, Papun district, Karen State. Soldiers captured a blind old Karen woman named Naw Thabat, aged 70. She was tied up to her house which was set on fire. She was burnt to death. Eight other houses were also destroyed. (**Source: HRDU**)
- ◆ On October 26, 1998, troops from LIB 360 came into Bubaw Khee village in the northern part of Papun district, Karen State, and killed Naw Roe Say, aged 60, without reason. Those troops also took away Saw Pwe Thwai, aged 58, and Saw Pah Day Htoo, aged 19, from the village and killed them on their way back. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On October 30, 1998, 20 soldiers from IB 285 based in The Chaung Gyi village in Thayetchaung township, Tenasserim Division, arrived at Malaka Chaung village in the region. The troops killed Saw Po Po, Saw Du, Saw Klo Se, Saw Ni Ni, Saw Pha Kyaw and Saw Yo Shwe from Malaka Chaung village when they found them working in their fields. The villagers were accused of helping KNU troops. (**Source: KHRG**)
- ◆ On November 2, 1998, a joint SPDC military column of LIB 547 and 549 led by Captin Nyi Nyi Aung indiscriminately shot into Htee Sakaw village, Hlaing Bwe township, Karen State. In the shooting U Po Pa, aged 60, and his eight-month-old grand-daughter

died. Two other villagers were also wounded. The troops also rounded up the male villagers to work as porters. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On November 3, 1998, a military column of IB 96 went into Pet Let Noe village, Thaton district, Mon State, and killed Saw Pah Noe, aged 36, without reason. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On November 7, 1998, troops from IB 59 came to Kyain village, Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division, and arrested village headman Saw Po Naw, aged 45, and Saw Than Oo, aged 35. The troops took both of them outside of the village and shot them dead. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On November 11, 1998, troops from IB 59 came to Htee Mu Hta village, Kweela village tract, Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division, and killed two brothers Saw Thay Moo, aged 22, and Saw Kho Pa, aged 18. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On November 16, 1998, troops from LIB 361, indiscriminately shot into the village of Maw Kee, Nyaunglebin district, Pegu Division. As a result, Naw Tha Paw, aged 18, was killed on the spot and three others were wounded. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ SPDC's LIB 358, led by Soe Win Shein, entered Manorone, Tenasserim township, Mergui district, where they were attacked by KNLA. After the attack the troops arrested Saw Kawin, 37-year-old son of Saw Tin Hlaing and one Naw Kay Yeh, accusing them of helping the KNLA movement. They killed them two days later on November 18, 1998. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On November 18, 1998, SPDC soldiers from IB 286 based in The Chaung village in Thayetchaung township, Tenasserim Division, killed nine villagers accusing them of being KNU supporters. These nine villagers were Saw Kalay Sa, Saw Htoo Mee, Saw Dah Bu, Saw Yo Mhwe, Saw Pauk Htoo, Saw Pwa Pwa, Naw Si as well as an unnamed two-year-old girl and a three-year-old boy. They all were from Tanyin Chaung village and were found by the soldiers while they were working their land. They were accused of providing food to the KNU soldiers and killed later. Naw Si was gang-raped before she was killed. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On 19, 1998, Saw Ko Pah, male aged 20, a Tee Hta villager who was studying to become a medic at Tee Muh Hta village, Ler doh township. He was unmarried. He was with a group of 7 villagers who were walking to Kler Kee, the SPDC troops suddenly opened fire on them in the fields near Kler Kee. Saw Ko Pah, Saw Maw Dah, male, aged 18, unmarried, and Naw Tha Paw, female, aged 20, unmarried from Maw Kee village were killed and their bodies left to rot. Two other villagers were wounded but escaped. The troops were from Colum 1 of LIB 361, commanded by Lt. Col. May Kyu. (*Source: KHRG*)

◆ On November 21, 1998, troops from SPDC army went into Htee-nya-pate-khee area, Kwee-lah village tract, Kyauk-kyi township, Pegu Division, and shot at villagers while they were reaping paddy in their fields. In this incident Saw Moo was wounded and Saw Thay Hai, a 10-month-old boy, was killed on the spot. The troops burnt down six paddy fields and six huts, together with 200 baskets of paddy in the threshing ground. In addition, the troops also collected the paddy bundles which had been reaped and burnt them. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On November 22, 1998, six villagers whose names are not known were killed in Tanyin Chaung village in Thayetchaung township, Tenasserim Division, by the SPDC soldiers from IB 286 based in The Chaung village in Thayetchaung township. They were

accused for being KNU supporters. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On November 23, 1998, troops from IB 234 shot and killed an unidentified villager about 25 years old at Kya-soe-khee village, Taungoo district, Pegu Division. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On November 24, 1998, three residents of Ta Kyit Mce Laung village, Tanintaye Township in the Tenasserim Division were executed in public after being accused of collaborating with KNU forces. Captain Tin Aung of LIB 557 ordered the troops to kill the three men in public. They were Saw Pho Kwye, Saw Toe Toe and Saw Nga Lwin. (*Source: Yoma 3*)

◆ At 10 a.m. on November 24, 1998, SPDC troops of LIB 368 fired mortar shells into parts of the forest near Kheh Der village where the villagers from Kheh Der village, Leh Doh township were hiding. A shell hit Saw Lay Lay Paw, male, aged 20, blowing him to pieces. (*Source: KHRG*)

◆ On November 25, 1998, two unknown porters from Pakari village, Tavoy township, Tenasserim Division were personally stabbed to death by the division commander Captain Kyi Win from LIB 544. They were among the more than 40 porters taken from different villages in Tavoy township on November 21 for the military column of LIB 544. Both were sick and could no longer carry their loads. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ Between November 26 to December 3, 1998, troops from IB 36 led by Lt-Col. Kyaw Sein stayed at Kyauk Taung village, Papun township, Karen State, and forcibly took 80,000 *kyat* as porter fees from the village. The troops killed U Ohn, a 45-year-old village. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On October 13, 1998, Saw Weh Dtoh, male, aged 40, a Karen farmer from Gka Ner Ko village was shot dead by an SPDC troops in his ricefield. The troops then burned his field hut. Saw Weh Dtoh leaves his wife and 3 children. (*Source: KHRG*)

◆ On December 1, 1998, a unit of DKBA led by Law Pla and Par Ler, came to Kalorlor village in Nyaunglebin district, Pegu Division, and killed Saw Gor Thu, aged 25, Saw Kyaw Thaung, aged 30, and Maung Htwe Soe, aged 20, without reason. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On December 6, 1998, a military column led by Major Aung Thein Oo from LIB 341 entered Narky Plaw village in Papun township, Karen State. The troops shot at random and later burnt down the whole village. All villagers fled from the burning village except Khee Htoo Phee, a 70-year-old blind Karen women. She was tied with a rope to a post in her house and burnt alive. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On December 12, 1998, troops from LIB 38 led by Captain Win Naing came to Htee The Lay village, Papun township, Karen State. The soldiers killed school teacher U Phar Hoke, 40 years old, his wife Daw Ma Twe, 35 years old, their sons Saw Nay Lwe, 16 years old and Saw Ni Say, 7 years old. The troops took 5,200 *kyat* from the family. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On December 20, 1998, about 50 soldiers from the Murg Ton-based IB 225 led by Major Nyan Myint killed Kaw Ling, a village headman, and his brother-in-law Pae Ti, from Nar Niu village, Murg Ton township, Shan State. They accused them of tipping off the ethnic armed forces to ambush the soldiers. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On December 22, 1998, troops from LIB 367 entered Ywa Po Lay village, Papun district, Karen State and shot dead Naw Set Lah. (*Source: KIC*)



The remains of Saw Ko Pah, male, aged 20 from Tee Muh Hta village, Ler Doh township. On November 19, 1998 he was shot dead in the fields near Kler Kee by the SPDC troops from Column 1 of LIB 361, commanded by Lt. Col. May Kyu. (Photo by KHRG)



The remains of Saw Weh Dtoh, male, aged 40, a Karen farmer from Gka Ner Ko village. He was working in his ricefield on October 13, 1998 when he was seen by an SPDC patrol and shot dead. The remains of his skull are visible in the centre of the photo, with his pink Karen bag above and part of his clothing to the left. (Photo by KHRG)



The remains of Saw Maw Dah, male, aged 18, an unmarried Karen rice farmer from Tee Mu Hta village, Ler Doh township. He was one of the three villagers shot dead on sight on November 19, 1998 by the SPDC troops from Column 1 of LIB 361. The remains of some of his clothing in the left-above of the picture and one of his legs can be seen in photo. (Photo by KHRG)



The remains of Saw Lay Paw, male, aged 20, from Kheh Der village, Ler Doh township. On November 24, 1998, troops of LIB 368 fired mortar shells into parts of the forest near Kheh Der village where he and many villagers were living and hiding. A shell hit Saw Lay Paw, blowing him to pieces. His skull and some of his clothing are visible in photo. (Photo by KHRG)

2. Arbitrary Detention and Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance

2.1 Background

Burma in 1998 continued to be ruled by a highly authoritarian military regime and people of all age groups and from almost every economic and social group have been detained on political grounds, often solely for their non-violent opposition to the SPDC's policies. Buddhist, Christian and Muslim clerics, other community leaders, university and high school students, writers, civil servants, doctors, lawyers, and workers' leaders have all been imprisoned. It is difficult to estimate the scale of political arrest and imprisonment in Burma. Many activists are never charged or tried, and false criminal charges are sometimes brought against political prisoners as a means of discrediting them. There is no guarantee of a fair trial for anyone accused of a political offence, so trial verdicts offer no reliable indication of whether a prisoner is guilty of a recognizable criminal offence or simply of non-violent opposition to the SPDC. Prior to being charged, detainees rarely have access to legal counsel or their families and political detainees have no opportunity to obtain release on bail. Political prisoners are held incommunicado for long periods. Even after being charged, detainees rarely have the benefit of legal counsel.

More than 1,000 people were imprisoned for political reasons in the second half of 1998 alone. Since then, hundreds more political prisoners have been detained in the SPDC's attempt to silence opposition.

The SPDC attacked the election winning party and its members and supporters through intimidation and detention and redoubled efforts to consolidate and perpetuate its military rule. In August 1998, the National League for Democracy (NLD), winner of the 1990 election, sought to expedite the transition to democracy by convening a parliament based on the election results. The SPDC responded by detaining a number of elected representatives, along with hundreds of other democracy supporters; most remain in detention. Since September 1998, at least 1,000 activists including 200 elected NLD MPs have been arrested, detained, or imprisoned for political reasons. By the year's end, SPDC released about 20 percent of these detainees, because they were ill or infirm.

2.2 Human Rights and SPDC Laws

The SPDC's use of its laws to quash the principles of basic human rights in Burma is long-standing and well-established. The SPDC has enforced laws curtailing civil and political freedom and utilized laws that allow it to crush any political opposition. The SPDC's laws and regulations hamper and even criminalize freedom of thought, the dissemination of information and the right of association and assembly.

The most commonly employed laws banning the demonstration of civil and political

rights have been the 1923 Government's Official Secrets Act, the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act, the 1957 Unlawful Associations Act, the 1962 Printers' and Publishers' Registration Law, the 1975 State Protection Law (Law to Safeguard the State against the Dangers of those desiring to cause Subversive Acts), Law No. 5/96 (Law Protecting the Peaceful and Systematic Transfer of State Responsibility and the Successful Performance of the Function of the National Convention against Disturbance and Opposition). These laws and orders have restricted the civil and political rights of Burmese citizens for years; now, with technological advances available across the globe, new laws have been enacted in order to provide the SPDC authorities additional legal bases to curtail freedom of expression and the exchange of information.

In 1998, in order to restrict the activities of the NLD MPs, the SPDC has used the 1961 Habitual Offenders Restrictions Act, that precludes members of political parties from leaving their localities or their houses without prior permission from the authorities; otherwise they risk arrest and interrogation by the police or military intelligence agents. A number of NLD elected representatives have been arrested or charged under this Habitual Offenders Restrictions Act. This 1961 Act was intended to be applied only to restrict the habitual offenders of the law; instead, it is being used only to harass the activities of the NLD MPs.

A description of some of the most widely-cited laws appears below:

◆ The 1950 Emergency Provisions Act allows up to seven years imprisonment for any person who "infringes upon the integrity, health, conduct, and respect of State military organizations and government employees, spreads false news about the government, or disrupts the morality or the behavior of a group of people." The law also makes it an offense, punishable by life imprisonment, to "intend to or to cause sabotage or hinder the successful functioning of the State military organizations and criminal investigative organizations." This law is commonly used by the regime to carry out indiscriminate and arbitrary arrest and detention of political opponents.

◆ Under the 1975 Law to Safeguard the State against the Dangers of those desiring to cause Subversive Acts (amended in 1991), the Council of Ministers is authorized under section 7 of the law to "pass an order, as may be necessary, restricting any fundamental right of a person if there are reasons to believe that any citizen has committed or is about to commit any act which infringes upon the sovereignty and security of the State or public peace and tranquility." The law also stipulates in sections 13 and 14, the possibility to continue imposing restraint for "a period not exceeding one year at a time up to a total of five years." This State protection law has been applied extensively to suppress peaceful political dissidents; it was used to detain Daw Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest between July 1989 and July 1995.

◆ The 1957 Unlawful Associations Act permits up to five years imprisonment for any person who has been a member of, contributes to, or receives or solicits any contribution towards any association which "encourages or aids persons to commit an act of violence or intimidation or in which the members habitually commit such acts; or which has been declared unlawful by the President of the Union." Moreover, anyone managing or assisting in promoting a meeting of such an association can be subjected to similar punishment. A number of organizations, including political parties, student unions, profession groups,

religious associations, as well as armed opposition groups, have been declared unlawful under this Act. This Act falls far short of international human rights standards; its incompatibility with international standards is underlined by the arbitrary, indiscriminate, and heavy-handed manner in which it is applied, usually to suppress peaceful dissent.

◆ A law issued on June 7, 1996, No. 5/96, allows prison sentences up to 20 years for anyone who expresses political views publicly. This law, entitled “The Protection of the Stable, Peaceful, and Systematical Transfer of State Responsibility and the Successful Implementation of National Convention Tasks, Free from Disruption and Opposition,” prohibits, *inter alia*, the preparation or dissemination of speeches or statements that undermine the stability of the State or are critical of the SPDC, and prescribes up to 20 years imprisonment for persons violating the law; organizations taking part in such activities can be banned and have their funds and property confiscated. Harassment of NLD members and supporters was further stepped up under this law.

◆ Under the 1980 Video Law, all video cassettes must be submitted to the Video Censorship Board, controlled by the SPDC, for scrutiny. Any person involved in the production, duplication, or distribution of videos is threatened with a prison term of up to three years under this law.

◆ The new Television and Video Act, issued on July 31, 1996, requires that: a) foreign diplomatic missions and United Nations agencies obtain permission to show imported videos at “public exhibitions” and gives Government video censorship boards the right to ban, censor, or restrict their showing; b) private video operators have to obtain licenses from the Video Business Supervisory Committees formed in all States and Divisions in the Union of Myanmar; and c) all videos, both imported and locally-produced, have to be approved by the Video Censorship Board. Violators of these provisions are subject up to three years in prison and/or a fine of up to 100,000 *kyat*. The new law also forbids private transmitters that are not authorized by the government, prescribing up to five-year prison terms for offenders.

◆ Another law entitled “The Computer Science Development Law,” issued on September 27, 1996, makes the unauthorized import, possession, and use of certain types of computer equipment illegal. For example, the unauthorized use of computers with networking capability is punishable with a sentence of between seven and 15 years in prison and/or a fine. A “Myanmar Computer Science Council” is to be established to decide which computer equipment should be restricted or banned. According to the government-controlled newspaper, *The New Light of Myanmar*, the punishment will be prescribed for anyone establishing links with a computer network without prior permission or who uses computer networks or information technology for undermining State security, law and order, national unity, the national economy, national culture, or who obtains or transmits State secrets. Members of unauthorized computer clubs may, according to reports, be sentenced to a minimum prison term of three years. A punishment of between five and 10 years in prison is prescribed for anyone who imports or exports computer software or information banned by the Myanmar Computer Science Council.

◆ Since July 1998, the SPDC has used the 1961 Habitual Criminal Offenders Act against NLD MPs in order to restrict the activities of the NLD. This puts repeat offenders on permanent bail, forcing them to sign up with local authorities on daily basis. Many NLD MPs refused to sign, and as a result by mid-July 1998, some 79 MPs were being detained.

This 1961 Act was intended to be applied only to restrict habitual offenders of the law. Since section 5/1(g) applies to those habitual lawbreakers and offenders only, the assumptions and accusations of the SPDC concerning the NLD MPs is not applicable. The restraining order issued under this Act that all MPs to remain within certain areas and not to be allowed to travel outside specific areas is a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

22.1 Breaking its own laws: The case of U Thein Aung

The SPDC has broken its own laws by charging twice for the same alleged offence against U Thein Aung, Salin township organizer of the NLD in Magwe Division in central Burma. He was arrested by the MI Unit 19 on September 7, 1998 and charged under the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act, and remanded in custody by a local court for two weeks at Sinbyugyun police station. When the remand expired on September 21, a further remand was ordered until October 6. After the expiry of this remand, U Thein Aung was transferred from the Sinbyugyun police station cell to Salin police station on the order of MIS officers. He was then charged again under the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act, despite the fact that he had already been charged for his alleged offence. Charging a person more than once for the same offence and detaining him in police custody in one place after another is a case of double jeopardy. (*Source: ABSDF*)

23 Partial List of the NLD MPs elect and members arrested in 1998

◆ On February 8, 1998, while Nan Khin Htwe Myint, elected NLD representative from Pa-an, was on her way to Rangoon to attend the Union Day celebrations held by the National League for Democracy, the car she was traveling in was stopped and searched at the Thaton checkpoint. After the search, noticing that some parts of her traditional Karen dress were missing, Nan Khin Htwe Myint raised the matter with the persons who conducted the search. The search party charged her of obstructing the function of officials. The following day, the court sentenced Nan Khin Htwe Myint to two years imprisonment for disturbing public servants on duty and was sent to Moulmein Prison immediately to serve out her sentence. (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ On February 13, 1998, three NLD members, Tin Aung, Wa Toke and Aye Win from the Bassein township NLD organizing committee, were detained for flying a peacock flag on the school flagpole of Bassein No. 1 High School on the morning of Union Day (February 12). They were subsequently arrested and sentenced under four different charges. (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ On February 16, 1998, U Myint Oo, NLD organizer from Prome township, Pegu Division, was arrested while he was staying at his friend's house in Budayone Street, Bassein township, Irrawaddy Division. The Reason for his arrest is not known, but the SPDC found NLD publications on him. (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ On February 23, 1998, U Ohn Myint, aged 81, a veteran respected by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested. In April, he was sentenced to seven years imprisonment under the 1962 Printers' and Publishers' Registration Act. At the SPDC's March 1, 1998 press

conference, the SPDC accused him for providing information to Aung Htun, who wrote a history of the Burmese student movement. U Ohn Myint is a senior advisor to the NLD. He had previously been arrested in June 1997 at the same time as several NLD members, and released unharmed late in July 1997. (**Source: ABSDF**)

◆ In the first week of April, Daw San San, elected NLD MP from Seikkan township, Rangoon and Vice-Chairman of the Rangoon Division Organizing Committee, was given 25 years prison sentence after being accused of distributing false information domestically and internationally. She was arrested in October 28, 1997 and has been held without charge. She was sentenced for conducting radio interviews with the BBC (British Broadcasting Service) and RFA (Radio Free Asia). (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ On May 22, 1998, elected NLD MP U Kan Oo from Salin township Constituency (2), Magwe Division, was arrested and charged under the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act 5(j). (**Source: ABSDF**)

◆ On May 30, 1998, NLD Prome township organizing committee members, including eight women, and Shwedaung township NLD chairman were arrested for holding a monthly meeting. In March 1999 they were sentenced to five years imprisonment. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ In June 1998, U Thar Maung, aged 79, elected NLD MP from Oakpho township Constituency (2), Pegu Division, was arrested and is held in custody at the military base of LIB 6 at Teinmyoke, east of Oakpho town. At first the MI took action against him under Section 5 (1 f and g) of the 1961 Habitual Offenders Act and his movement was restricted under bond. Then action was taken under Section 5(j) of the 1959 Emergency Provisions Act. He has refused the offer by the authorities for a short visit to his home. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ In June 1998, U Tin Oo, aged 59, elected NLD MP from Oakpho township Constituency (1), Pegu Division, was arrested and placed in custody at the military base of LIB 6 at Teinmyoke, east of Oakpho town. At first the MI took action against him under Section 5 (1 f and g) of the 1961 Habitual Offenders Act and his movement was restricted under bond. Then, action was taken under Section 5(j) of the 1959 Emergency Provisions Act. He has also refused the offer by the authorities for a short visit to his home. The authorities have neglected to provide him with proper food and nourishment, resulting in his being admitted to hospital on December 15, 1998. His condition is serious and requires proper treatment. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ In June 1998, U San Tin, aged 64, elected NLD MP from Zeegone township Constituency (1), Pegu Division, was arrested and is held in custody at the LIB 6 military base at Teinmyoke, east of Oakpho town. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ On June 8, 1998, U Win Nu, a lawyer and NLD central committee member of Pantanaw township, Irrawaddy Division, was arrested by the SPDC. He was sentenced to one month in prison with hard labor. The charges against him are unknown. (**Source: ABSDF**)

◆ On June 8, U Aung Thein and U Hla Myint, two NLD members, were sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment each for having disclosed to journalists the contents of a letter from an ethnic cease-fire group addressed to intelligence chief Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ In the last week of June, Dr. Tin Min Htut, elected NLD MP from Pantanaw township

Constituency (1), U David Hla Myint, elected NLD MP from Ngaputaw township Constituency (1), and U Mahn Jonny, elected NLD MP from Kyonpyaw township Constituency (1), were arrested under the Emergency Act 5(j). (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ On July 19, 1998, U Yoe and U Shwe Win, Belin township central committee members in Mon State, were arrested by the SPDC authorities for organizing a Martyrs Day commemoration without permission. They were charged with Emergency Act 5(j). (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ In the month of August, 1998, U Toe Po, from Yebyu township, U Kyaw Shein and U Nyan Aye from Mergui township, U Hla Pe and U Chein Hin from Launglon township, U Khin Maung Oo from Kyunsuu township, U Win Oo from Tenasserim township, U Kyi Shwe from Palaw township, U Phone Myint from Bokepyin township, U Khin Maung Oo from Chaungsuu township, U Toe Bo from Yebyu township and U Myo Aung from Tavoy township all NLD elected MP were charged under the Emergency Act 5(j). Also arrested in August were U Ba Kyi, Tavoy NLD Chairman, U Aye Naing, Launglon township organizer, U Ba Aye, U Kyaw Nyein, U Pyison, U Saw Hla, U Tin Maung, U Aung Lwin, U Shwe Hla, U Kyin Shein, Palaw township NLD youth organizer, U Aung Soe, Kawthaung township NLD in charge of youth affairs, U Aye Naing, Launglon township organizer, U Than Lwin Palaw NLD in charge information, U Chit Thein and U Soe Ko NLD, members from Launglon township, and U Tin Hlaing, NLD member from Kyunsuu township. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On August 2, 1998, 11 members of the NLD in Chauk township, Magwe Division, were arrested by the troops from MI 15 for allegedly distributing of “Messages to the Nation by the General Secretary”. Those two messages were dated July 23, 1998 and had already been distributed. MI raided three houses of the NLD members at the same time and rounded up the NLD members. They also confiscated the tapes of NLD leaders’ speeches and other NLD documents. The NLD members arrested were township chairman U Kyi Toe, vice chairman U Nyunt Wai, Secretary U Hla Kyu, township organizers U Aung Than Nyunt and U Hla Thaung, executive members U Win Saung and U Myint Naing, and ward NLD leaders U Than Nyunt, U Than Win, U Aung Myint and U Khin Maung Aye. U Kyi Toe and U Aung Than Nyunt were tried on August 13, 1998, under the Printers’ and Publishers’ Registration Act. The case was tried in camera with no member of the public being admitted. Judgement was passed on August 14 in the police station where they were being held. They were sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment with hard labor under the Article 16 of the Penal Code. U Than Win was blindfolded and beaten after another eight members were released. (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ On August 3, 1998, the SPDC arrested U Bo Htwe, NLD MP from Nat Mauk township Constituency (1), Magwe Division, U Tha Aung, NLD MP from Myothiy township Constituency, Magwe Division, and U Tin Win, NLD MP from Kyeik Latt township Constituency (1), Irrawaddy Division. (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ On August 11, 1998, U Kyi Lwin, NLD MP from Nga Pe township, Magwe Division, was arrested by the SPDC after he failed to report to the police station twice in one day. (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ On August 12, 1998, Naw Ohn Hla, Daw Cho Cho Myint, Ko Khin Kyaw and Ko Hla Win, all members of the NLD who went to visit Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in her car when it was stopped at Anyasuu village, Htantabin township, Rangoon Division, were

arrested by the SPDC. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On August 13, Daw Naw Ohn Hla, Daw Cho Cho Myint, Ko Khin Kyaw and Ko Hla Win, all members of the NLD, were also arrested while they were trying to meet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who was held at the place where her car had been stopped at Ayarsuu village. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On August 14, U Thein Oo, U Soe Win and U Mahn Nyunt Thein, supporters of the NLD, were arrested while they were trying to see Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who was prevented from proceeding to Bassein at Ayarsuu village. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ In early September, Sai Lon Kyauk, NLD MP from Kengtung township constituency (1), Sai Nong Tip, NLD MP from Mai Yan township and Sai Htun Aung, NLD MP from Kai Yaung township, were arrested by the SPDC and charged under the Emergency Provisions Act 5(j). (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ In the first week of September 1998, U Tin Myint, NLD MP from Thayetchaung township, Tenasserim Division, and division organizer U Aung Soe were arrested for allegedly causing threat to the stability in the region. Both were charged under the Emergency Provisions act 5(j). (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ In the first week of September 1998, the chairperson of Toungoo township committee of the NLD, U Maung Maung and three committee members U Tin Maung Win, U Min Thet, and U Pe Win (election representative of U Nyunt Wai, CEC member of the NLD) were arrested in Taungoo, Pegu Division. The arrested persons have been kept by the authorities in the military compound of LIB 39. The military intelligence has threatened that they will be sent to the frontline areas as porters. (*Source: DPNS*)

◆ In the second week of September 1998, Magwe township NLD secretary U Maung Maung and joint secretary U Than Htun were arrested by the SPDC. (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ In September 1998, Nai Ngwe Thein, vice-chairman of the Mon National League for Democracy, was arrested by the SPDC. He was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment under the Emergency Provisions Act 5(j) at the Moulmein township court in the second week of December 1998, along with Dr. Min Kyi Win elected MNLD MP from Mudon township constituency (2) and Dr. Min Soe Lin, elected MP of MNLD from Ye township constituency (1). (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On September 5, 1998, Dr. Hla Shein NLD MP from Yaksauk township, Shan State was arrested and charged under Emergency Provisions Act 5(j). (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On September 6, 1998, Nai Ngwe Thein, senior Mon political leader was arrested. On October 9, 1998, he was charged under the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act at a township court in Moulmein, Mon State, for his role in supporting the Committee Representing People's Parliament. (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ On September 6, 1998, Dr. U Saw Mra Aung, an 80-year-old medical doctor and an elected NLD MP and U Kyaw Shin, deputy chairman of the NLD Sagaing Division organizing committee, were arrested in Monwya township. On the night of December 15, 1998, Captain Htay Win of the MI took U Kyaw Shin to hospital where his wife was in a state of semi-coma. She died on the morning of December 16. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On September 6, 1998, Thakin Tin Nyunt, age 85, NLD MP from Yenangyaung township, Magwe Division, and veteran politician was arrested. He was released on September 14, 1998. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On September 6, 1998, U Aung Min, a member of the organizing committee of Mandalay Northeast township, Mandalay Division, was arrested by the Military Intelligence and imprisoned at IB 95. No family visit was allowed during his detention. On October 21, his wife, Daw Thwe Thwe San was informed by the same MI officers that U Aung Min died on the evening of October 21. The statement issued by the SPDC said U Aung Min, 52, had suffered from cancer of the lymph glands which had spread all over his body. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On September 6, 1998, Dr. Thein Lwin, chairman of the Meikhtila township organizing committee and MP elect and Daw Myint Myint Aye, secretary of the organizing committee, Mandalay Division, were arrested. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On September 7, 1998, NLD MP U Htun Win from Mindon township in Magwe Division was arrested and charged under the Emergency Provisions Act 5(j). He was detained at Mindon Police Station until he was released on November 6, 1998. He was immediately rearrested and charged under Criminal Act 380/54. (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ On September 7, 1998, Magwe Division, Min Hla township NLD Chairman U Kyaw Thaung and NLD central committee members U Thein Zaw, U Myint Lwin and U Hlaing Myint Thein were arrested and charged under the Emergency Provisions Act 5 (j) on September 14. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On September 7, 1998, U Thein Aung, NLD organizer from Salin township, Magwe Division, was arrested by the MI 19 and detained at the Sinbyukyun Police Station, charged under the Emergency Provisions Act 5(j). He was transferred to Salin Police Station after he finished his two remands. He was charged again at the Salin Police Station under the Emergency Provisions Act. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On September 8, 1998, Dr. Min Soe Lin, elected MP for the Mon National League for Democracy (MNLD) from Ye township constituency (1) and secretary of MNLD was arrested by the MI 5. He was sentenced by the Moulmein township court to seven years imprisonment under the Emergency Provisions Act 5(j) in the second week of December 1998 along with the vice-chairman of MNLD, Nai Ngwe Thein and Dr. Min Kyi Win, elected MP for the MNLD from Mudon township constituency (2). (*Source: Inside Source*)

◆ On September 8, 1998, NLD Shan State organizer U Aung Maung and NLD Taunggyi township organizer U Tin Shwe were arrested by the SPDC for allegedly inciting unrest in Taunggyi township. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On September 8, 1998, Maung Mya Sein, a member of the NLD youth wing, who was leaving the NLD head office on West Shwegondine Road, Rangoon, was seized and thrown into a waiting vehicle. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On the early morning of September 9, 1998, U San Maung, a NLD secretary from Pantamaw township, Irrawaddy Division, was arrested at the house of U Maung Maung in Zutchee village in the same township. He was arrested for failing to submit the guest registration that is required for all guests staying overnight in other people's houses. Both U San Maung and his host U Maung Maung were taken to Pantanaw and sentenced to 15 days under the Village Act 15/16 at the Pantanaw township court on the same day. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On September 10, 1998, Nai Tun Thein, chairman of the Mon National Democratic Front (MNDF) and MP from Thanbyzayut township, Mon State, was arrested. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On September 11, 1998, Ma Mi Mi Khaing, a member of NLD Youth Central Supporting Group, was arrested on her way home. She dropped by at her friend's house on the day of arrest and after she left, MI officers forcibly arrested her in Mandalay Road, in Northern New Dagon town, Rangoon Division. The MI officers led by Sergeant Tun Sein blocked the whole road to arrest her. She was later handed over to Rangoon Eastern Military Command. **(Source: Inside Burma)**

◆ On September 14, 1998, Ma Khin San Yee from Mingla Taung Nyunt township, Rangoon Division, was found with NLD documents in her room at the guesthouse in Magwe. She was arrested and charged under the Emergency Provisions Act 5(j). **(Source: HRDU)**

◆ On September 16, 1998, security forces comprising MI and local SPDC members arrived at the home of U Kyaw San who is a central committee member and chairman of the Sagaing Division organizing committee of the NLD. It was 9:00 p.m. They arrived in police vehicles and without permission and warrants, climbed over the fence and tried to force the two people in the house to open the door. They told the security officers to come back the following day as it was not appropriate time. They did not open the door to the officers. The raiding party invaded the compound and pounded on the front door and all the windows. They tried to open the main door with a crowbar. When it failed, the raiding party spent the whole night pounding on the house, and also cut the telephone line. On the morning of September 17, a group of officials led by Captain Ye Kyaw Thu from MI 5 came and arrested U Kyaw San. On the same day, a group of officers forced the people in the house to open the door and conducted a search with a legal warrant. They demanded that all papers be handed over to them. The owner of the home had to comply. After conducting a thorough search, they forced the owner of the house to sign an acknowledgement that the materials were given to the officers with his consent. Instead the owner stated that the materials had been confiscated. He was arrested on September 19, U Kyaw San's family was informed by the MI 6 that he wanted his family to bring him some personal items. When his family went to MI 6 headquarters, the officials told them that U Kyaw San had been sent to Insein Prison. **(Source: Inside Burma)**

◆ On September 16, 1998, Dr. Min Kyi Win, elected MP of Mon National League for Democracy from Mudon township Constituency (2) was arrested by the soldiers from MI 5 led by Corporal Yu Lwin. They also took the documents and publications of the NLD found at his house and clinic. He was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment under the Emergency Provisions Act 5(j) at the Moulmein township court in the second week of December 1998 along with vice-chairman of MNLD, Nai Ngwe Thein and Dr. Min Soe Lin, elected MP of MNLD from Ye township Constituency (1). **(Source: Inside Burma)**

◆ On September 18, 1998, U Tin Myint, secretary of the organizing committee, Thingangyun township, Rangoon Division, was arrested on the No. 42 public transportation bus by the MIS. **(Source: Inside Burma)**

◆ On September 21, 1998, the MI tried to arrest Ma Cho Cho and Ma Khin Khin Hlaing, both members of the Youth Wing, Thaketa township, Rangoon Division, at the bus stand in Shwedondine township, Rangoon. They escaped and the MI surrounded the residence of these two young girls at night. **(Source: Inside Burma)**

◆ On September 22, 1998, Daw Sandi Win, in-charge of Magwe Division NLD women's affairs, was arrested and charged under the Emergency Provisions Act 5(j). **(Source: HRDU)**

- ◆ On September 23, 1998, seven NLD members from Sanchaung township, Rangoon Division, were arrested and kept at Sanchaung Police Station. The next day, they were remanded and sent to Insein Prison. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)
- ◆ On the evening of September 23, 1998, NLD member Ko Than Lwin and his wife, from Sanchaung township, Rangoon Division, were arrested and taken away from their home, leaving two small children alone in the house. Though they requested that only one of them be taken, the arresting team replied that this was “out of their power.” (**Source: *Inside Burma***)
- ◆ On September 23, 1998, a team of MI and Navy personnel attempted to seize and capture Pyi Son Kyaw, NLD member of the youth wing of Irrawaddy Division organizing committee near the Mingala market in Mingla Taung Nyunt township, Rangoon Division. Brutality and force used against him caused anger among the people around and they prevented his arrest. Pyi Son Kyaw fortunately escaped. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)
- ◆ On September 24, 1998, NLD member Ma Hnin May Aung from Thingangyun township, Rangoon Division, was arrested and taken into custody by a team consisting of MI, police and ward leaders. Two video cameramen were present at the time of arrest. When she asked to see the warrant, they replied “no warrant is necessary because this is not an opium case. The presence of the ward elders is sufficient. You can go and report us to whoever you like.” They ransacked the house and seized whatever papers they found. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)
- ◆ On the night of September 28, 1998, two organizing committee members from Syriam township and Dawpon township, one ward organizing committee member from North Okkalapa township, and two members from the NLD youth wing were arrested. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)
- ◆ On September 28, 1998, U Thaung Tin, NLD MP from Pyapon township Constituency (1), Irrawaddy Division, was arrested by the SPDC and detained at the Pyapon township Department of Correction’s guesthouse. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)
- ◆ On the night of September 29, 1998, one member from the NLD Central Women Group and 12 other organizing committee members were arrested. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)
- On September 29, 1998, U Ngwe Zun Hla, a NLD member and Kamine township organizing committee member, was arrested for allegedly having links with suspected persons. (**Source: *HRDU***)
- ◆ On September 29, 1998, U Nyunt Hlaing, an active NLD member in Moe Kaung township, Kachin State, was arrested and charged with purchasing stolen materials. Those who sold him the stolen watch he wore were not detained, but U Nyunt Hlaing was arrested for purchasing the watch. (**Source: *HRDU***)
- ◆ On October 4, 1998, Ko Ne Lin, a member of the NLD divisional youth organizing committee, from Aung Mye Thazan township, Mandalay, was taken away by the SPDC Military Intelligence. He was forced to sign a statement renouncing his NLD membership and to give up his political activities at the Ward Peace and Development Council (Ward PDC) office. As he refused, he has been detained in a lockup at the Ye Htwet military camp, Yankin Taung, east of Mandalay. (**Source: *NCUB***)
- ◆ On October 7, 1998, the SPDC announced that 54 people, including one NLD MP and 22 NLD members, had been arrested for “staging anti-government demonstrations in August and September, 1998.” According to the SPDC statement, young people and students

had been distributing leaflets in Burma calling for the convening of the parliament and expressing sympathy for the NLD. It also claimed that these groups had been supported financially by Western organizations. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On November 2, 1998, Ko Htun Tint Wai (aka) Htun Zaw Zaw, one of the leaders of NLD central youth wing, was sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment at Thingangyun township court. He was charged under Sections 420 and 468 of the Penal Code. The sentence was seven years for infringing Section 420 and seven years for Section 468 which are maximum sentences for each offense. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On December 26, 1998, U Ye Naung, U Than Maung, U Aung Moe, U Kyaw Htwe Oo, U Aung Htein and U Joseph, all members of Meikhtila township NLD organizing committee, Mandalay Division, were arrested by Ko Myint Toe and three other MI personnel for submitting objections about the arrest of members of the NLD by the SPDC. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On December 28, 1998, U Thein Aung, vice-chairman of the Meikhtila township organizing committee, and U Htun Shwe, U San Htoon, U Thong Shein, U Maung Maung, U Sein Ywet and Daw Tin Tin Htwe, members of committee, were arrested by the MI 5. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On January 22, 1999, U Kyaw San, NLD organizing committee for Prome township, Pegu Division, was arrested for distributing a NLD statement. His fortune-telling shop in the pagoda precinct was shut down on February 8, 1998 after his arrest. (*Source: HRDU*)

24. Massive arrest of NLD supporters

Since September 1998, most of the NLD MPs-elect, members of organizing committees from the States, Divisions, townships, wards, villages and other ordinary members have been illegally arrested and imprisoned by the SPDC and MI. Many of them are being held in various places all over the country. Some have been sent to Insein Prison and other prisons across the country. But the military-run media and the military strategy studies department have publicized this as: "a great number of NLD members have been invited to Government guesthouses to give their views as to how parliament can be convened without a constitution and to present them with the Government's position on the matter." The media claimed that "the purpose of so doing is to explain the position of the authorities regarding the convening of parliament in the absence of any constitution and to seek their views on the matter." In a news briefing held in Rangoon on November 22, Lt-Col. Hla Min stated that "arrangements were made for NLD party members and elected representatives from various constituencies to take up temporary residence at State guesthouses in their respective areas from September 6 onwards. A total of 200 NLD representatives and 651 party members were included in these arrangements. "However, the truth is the SPDC has applied pressure, intimidation, and threats to obtain in writing the involuntary resignations from office of MPs-elect and from membership of the NLD, the involuntary resignation from organizing committees and membership of the NLD, and the involuntary resignation from membership of the NLD of ordinary members. Those who refused to put their signatures to such resignations were threatened with more trouble.

These arrests and detentions are reported in the military-run media as "holding discussions and exchanging views" between the SPDC and NLD supporters. However, no

discussions have taken place, but these NLD supporters were forced to answer the questions such as “Is the calling for the convening of the people’s parliament by the NLD lawful or not?” “Will you or will you not attend the parliament convened by the NLD?” NLD supporters have been given written questionnaires to which they are required to respond in writing. Those who supplied written answers favorable to the MI are given their freedom while the others are persecuted more severely.

In addition to these fabrications, the SPDC permits some NLD MPs to spend a day or a night or a Saturday or a Sunday with their families making it appear they are having a break. This is an attempt to demoralize the individual and members of his family. The SPDC authorities told those MPs who were permitted to return to their homes for a short visit that if they stopped their association with the NLD or if members of the NLD did not contact them, they would be allowed more visits, perhaps once a week or once a month. This is an attempt to isolate the members of the party.

Without their consent, their every movement, their conversation with members of the family, their eating of meals with the family are recorded by video cameras. This is for the purpose of presenting to the world a false picture that detained NLD members are being treated well. Some NLD members were abruptly forced to leave while taking a meal with their family by MI personnel.

25. Arrest of student activists

In addition to opposition politicians, students are also target of arrests in 1998. Although universities had remained closed since December 1996, many students were arrested for participation in small series of demonstration in Rangoon on August 24, near Rangoon University and on September 22, 1998, near the Sule pagoda in downtown. On August 24, about 247 students and member of NLD youth wing were arrested but most of them were later released after being interrogated by the MI. Members of two student-backed organization, the All Burma Federation of Student Union and Democratic Party for New Society are among the people detained.

25.1 Long sentences for writing history of the student movement

In February, 1998, Ko Aung Tun, a Central Executive Committee member of the All Burma Federation of Students Union (ABFSU) was arrested and, according to the SPDC official statement, was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment for breaking the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Act; to seven years under the provisions of the Unlawful Associations Act, and to another seven years under the Emergency Provisions Act for a total of 17 years in prison. At a press conference on March 1, 1998, the SPDC claimed that Ko Aung Tun was collaborating with terrorist groups. The real reason for his arrest was because he had written a history of the student movement in Burma. Ko Aung Tun was active in the student-led 1988 pro-democracy movement and was imprisoned from 1990 to 1994.

According to the DPNS, the following are the among the hundreds of people, including Buddhist monks and 50 lawyers, detained for allegedly collaborating or giving assistance to Ko Aung Htun; some were student leaders of the All Burma Students’

Federation Union (ABSFU) in the 1950s and 1960s. They include Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw (lawyer), Ko Khun Sai (lawyer), U Khin Maung Nyein (lawyer), U Tin Maung (lawyer), U Tin Aye (lawyer), U Ohn Maung, Parachute (former politician), U Ko Yu (lawyer and writer), U Thar Ban (former student leader, U Kyi Lin (lawyer), U Aung Myint (lawyer and former student leader), U Myo Myint (activist), U Tint Lwin (activist), Myoma U Tin Aye (lawyer). (**Source: DPNS**)

In late February 1998, Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw along with the two female student leaders, Suu Suu Win and Khin Moe Aye, and ethnic leaders U Tha Ban and Khun Sai were arrested by the SPDC. All five were accused of supplying historical details and other information to the student leader Aung Htun who wrote a history of the Burmese student movement. In April the SPDC sentenced Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw and two other ethnic leaders to 10 years' imprisonment for assisting a student historian in writing a history of the Burmese student movement. Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw and the other four were charged under Section 5(j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act and under Section 17 (20) of the 1962 Printers' and Publishers' Registration Act. The military regime also sentenced the two female student leaders to seven year prison terms. All five were refused access to legal counsel. Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw is a well-known and respected lawyer and is the patron of the Society for International Friends (Union of Burma). He was first arrested in 1989 for working with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in carrying out political defiance work and was released in April 1992. U Tha Ban is a journalist and lawyer, and CEC member of the Union National League for Democracy (UNLD), a coalition of legal ethnic parties allied with the NLD. He was first detained in January 1991 and given a five year prison term under Section 5(j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions. He was released in February 1995. Khun Sai had been arrested twice in the past 25 years before this latest arrest. He was given a seven year prison sentence for his role in the 1974 U Thant's funeral strike and in November 1989 he was detained again, to be released in 1993. Suu Suu Win and Khin Moe Aye were first arrested in December 1991 for leading a student demonstration at Rangoon University. The two were jailed for 10 years each but released in May 1992.

26. Partial list of the activists arrested in 1998

◆ On January 23, 1998, 18 students were arrested in Rangoon for handing a letter of protest against the military regime to the UN special envoy, Alvaro de Soto. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ In February, 1998, Ko Aung Tun was arrested and, according to the SPDC official statement, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for breaking the 1962 Printers and Publishers' Registration Act; he was also sentenced to seven years under the provisions of the Unlawful Associations Act, and another seven years under the Emergency Provisions Act, for a total of seventeen years in prison. Another five persons, were also arrested in late February for allegedly assisting in the preparation of his book. At March 1, 1998 press conference, the SPDC claimed that Ko Aung Tun was collaborating with terrorist groups. The real reason for his arrest was because he had written a history of the student movement in Burma. Ko Aung Tun was active in the student-led 1988 pro-democracy movement and was imprisoned from 1990 to 1994. (**Source: ABSFU**)

◆ In late February 1998, Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw along with the two female student

leaders, Suu Suu Win and Khin Moe Aye, and ethnic leaders U Tha Ban and Khun Sai were arrested by the SPDC. All five were accused of supplying historical background and other information to student leader Aung Htun who wrote a history of the Burmese student movement. In April SPDC sentenced Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw and two other ethnic leaders to 10 years' imprisonment for assisting a student historian in his work to write a history of the Burmese student movement. Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw and the other four were charged under Section 5(j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act and under Section 17 (20) of the 1962 Printers' and Publishers' Registration Act. The military regime also sentenced two female student leaders to seven year prison terms. All five were refused access to legal counsel. (**Source: ABSDF**)

◆ On March 1, 1998, at an SPDC press conference, the SPDC named several men, some of them students, who were accused of having taken part in plot to assassinate SPDC leaders or otherwise disturb the peace. Six of those arrested, Ko Thein, Khin Hlaing, Naing Aung, Thant Zaw Swe, Myint Han and Let Yar Htun were sentenced to death for their part in alleged bomb plots. Thirty-three others were given harsh sentences. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ On April 30, 1998, James Rupert Russell Mawdsley, holding dual citizenship of British and Australia, was arrested at the Central Market in Moulmein, Mon State, while distributing anti-SPDC leaflets. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment on May 13, 1998 at Insein township court. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ During May and June 1998, the following leaders of Democratic Party for New Society in Mandalay Division were arrested and charged with prison terms of seven years and up. They were Ko Nyein Chan, Ko Yar Kyaw, Ma Thida and Ma Ommar. (**Source: DPNS**)

◆ In August, 1998, Ko Aye Ko, Tin Ko Aung, Min Naing, Ma Ni and Kyaw Soe, all are members of Democratic Party for New Society in upper Burma, were arrested. (**Source: DPNS**)

◆ On August 10, 1998, the SPDC MI arrested Maung Soe Min and Maung Myo Min Htun, from State High School (2), Maung Aung Moe Thu and Maung Nyi Nyi Aung from State High School (1) and Maung Zarni Win Kyaw from High School (4), in Mergui, Tenasserim Division. All are ninth grade students. The MI found anti-SPDC literature on them after the hit-and-run demonstration in Mergui on August 4. (**Source: ABSDF**)

◆ On August 10, 1998, Aung Ko Yu, a former high school student from Tavoysuu ward, Mergui, Tenasserim Division, was rounded up by the MI for his leadership of the hit-and-run demonstration in Mergui on August 4. He was later charged with 1950 Emergency Act Article 5(j). (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On August 22, 1998, Maung Kan Myint, and Maung Htay Aung, both 16 years old and from Bogyoke Street, Ye, Mon State were rounded up by the MI 5 for allegedly distributing anti-SPDC literature from a motorcycle at night. (**Source: ABSDF**)

◆ In the first week of September 1998, about 100 Democratic Party for New Society members of Rangoon, Mandalay, Pegu, Sagaining, and the Delta regions were arrested. (**Source: DPNS**)

◆ On September 4, 1998, Moe Thura, a university student and Nyein Chan, Zaw Win Naing, Zaw Moe, Ko Thitsa and U Than Nwe were arrested by the SPDC authorities in Palaw, Tenasserim Division. They were accused of encouraging people to stage a

demonstration against the SPDC on August 27. They were rounded up by MI 19. On September 15, Moe Thura, Nyein Chan, Zaw Win Naing and Zaw Moe were sentenced to five years' imprisonment and the other two were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On September 4, 1998, at least 12 Buddhist monks were arrested and three others sustained injuries after riot police violently broke up a protest in Mandalay. Some 50 students also participated in the protest. (*Source: ABSDF*)

■ On September 22, 1998, Htun Myint Kyaw, a leading member of All Burma Federation of Students Union (ABFSU), was arrested in Alone township, Rangoon. The MI beat and kicked him once he was rounded up. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On December 22, 1998, Khin Soe from Ye township, Mon State was arrested for allegedly having contacted the People's Defense Force, an exile group based on the Thai-Burma border. The SPDC announced that other NLD members who had assisted him were also exposed. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

27. Partial lists of the civilians arrested in 1998

◆ On September 16, 1998, a DKBA troops led by Captain Titti from Division (3) came to Thayetdaw villaged, Kawkareik township, Karen State. They arrested U Myint Aung Sein, chairman of villaged PDC (Peace and Develop Council) and Saw Khin Kyi, secretary of the villaged PDC. They were arrested because the village was unable to pay a tax of 45,000 kyat for purchasing weapons for the DKBA troops. They were later released after the village gave the required amount of money. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ Since November 10, 1998, 23 people were arrested by the SPDC IB 102 and all are still under detention as of January 1999. They were accused of being supporters or part of the hard core of the KNPP troops. The names of the persons detained are Maung Htet, aged 30, Labine, aged 15, Lular, aged 30 (all from Lee Woe village, Sindaung), Than Aung, aged 49, Aung Myint, aged 35, Maung Kin, aged 29, Ohn Pwint, aged 38 (all from Kat Faeku villaged, Nah Sankan) Say Reh, aged 38 and Saw Reh, aged 30 (both from Wei Theku village, Sindaung), Byah Reh, aged 32 and Shar Reh, aged 25 (both from Daw Pawku village, Moebye) Pray Reh, aged 25 from Htee Theklo village, Sor Reh and Paku (1), aged 29, from Tani Lahleh, Paku (2), aged 17, Ngah Reh, aged 45 and Deh Reh, aged 30, from Daw Klokku village, Tyaruu (1), aged 21, from Htee Pawsoe village, Tyaruu(2), aged 22, from Ngwedaung, Tee Kahn, aged 37 from Dawbo Sei village, Maung San, aged 26, from Pankan village, and Lucas, aged 29, from Lay Woe village, Demawsoe. (*Source: KNAHR*)

◆ On December 24, 1998, U Sai Ba Thein and Sai Oak, both farmers from Pun Htun village, Linke township, Shan State were arrested for allegedly inciting farmers not to obey the paddy selling policy announced by the local authorities. They were charged with Criminal Act 505(f) and are being detained at Linke Police Station. (*Source: HRDU*)

28. Death sentence on the activists

Ko Thein aka Ko Thein Htun, aged 44, Naing Aung aka Fighter Aung, aged 31, Thant Zaw Swe, aged 31, Myint Han aka Mya Han, aged 44, Khin Hlaing, aged 51, and Let Yar Htun, aged 29, received death penalty after the 14 years imprisonment, according to the

SPDC press conference in March 1, 1998. The SPDC alleged that the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), an exile student group based on the border area, together with the All Burma Students Union, an underground student group inside Burma, the NLD and the defunct Burma Communist Party all conspired to "instigate public unrest." Furthermore, it claimed that ABSDF member Ko Thein was involved in a plot to assassinate state leaders and blow up public buildings. Thant Zaw Swe, Naing Aung, Myint Han, Let Yar Htun and Khin Hlaing were also alleged to be involved in anti-SPDC activities. The six men were among a group of 39 people arrested in connection with the alleged anti-SPDC "plot". Myint Han is a Buddhist monk known as U Sanda Thiri and a member of the Young Monks Association. Let Yar Htun, imprisoned from 1991 to 1995, Naing Aung and Thant Zaw Swe are ABSDF members. Khin Hlaing is a former teacher and NLD member who was imprisoned in 1991 for allegedly having contact with the ABSDF. All are believed to have been arrested in January 1998. The ABSDF denied that its members were involved in violent activities, indicating that they only carried out peaceful political activities. None of the 39 people arrested was given legal representation during trial in early April at a special court inside Insein Prison.

29. Arrest of 54 people for peaceful civil disobedience and long prison sentences

The SPDC announced that 54 people, including 23 NLD members, had been detained for causing student unrest and demonstrations in August and September. Among those detained were activists of exile groups who had obtained funds and conspired with foreign organizations to incite the disturbances, SPDC spokesman Col. Thein Swe told a news conference. He said the 54 people detained did not include NLD members and elected MPs who have been questioned in government guesthouses. The SPDC accused foreign organizations of "attempting to incite unrest in the country." The organizations include the New York-based Open Society Institute (OSI) and Thai chapter of the Vatican-based Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and exiled Burmese groups such as the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), the Karen National Union (KNU), the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) and the Alternative Asean Network of Burma. Both OSI and JRS denied the SPDC accusations.

The SPDC issued a 15 page statement providing details of people involved in a plot to incite unrest. However, after reading the document, Amnesty International (AI) stated it could find no evidence that any of those named engaged in anything other than peaceful civil disobedience in Burma.

According to the ABFSU, these 54 people were among the 1,000 students and youths arrested for their participation in a peaceful demonstration demanding that the SPDC hold a dialogue with the NLD. Among them, Tun Myint Aung, a leading member of ABFSU, was arrested on September 22, 1998 in Alone township, Rangoon. He was beaten by the Military Intelligence upon his arrest. Myo Min Zaw, a student leader of recent student demonstrations and a member of ABFSU, was also arrested at the demonstration and beaten by the security forces. Two other students, who were only 14-15 years old, were beaten and kicked by the Military Intelligence at the demonstration. (*Source: ABFSU*)

At least 270 people out of 1,000 students and youths were sentenced to long prison

terms in Burma in January. More than 200 students were given 14 years each while exceptionally long sentences of 52, 38, 23 and 21 years were handed down to four students. Most of the rest received seven years' imprisonment.

2.10. Arrest of foreign activists

On August 9, 1998, one day after the tenth anniversary of democracy uprising in 1988, the SPDC detained a group of 18 foreign activists for distributing anti-government leaflets in Rangoon. The leaflets commemorated the anniversary of the democracy uprising and the violent suppression of the pro-democracy movement. These 18 activists, 10 men and eight women, were Michele Keegan (USA), Nisha Anand (USA), Sapna Chatpar (USA), Anjanette Hamilton (USA), Tyler Gianini (USA), Joel Greer (USA), Alison Marty Vickar (Australia), Jaran Ditapicha (Thailand), Suwat Uppahad (Thailand), Chanakan Phundaemvong (Thailand), Ellene Sana (Philippines), Ponciano Resuena (Philippines), See Chee How (Malaysia), Jonson Chong (Malaysia), Ju Lyn Ong (Malaysia), Cass Evert (Indonesia), Haikel (Indonesia) and Fadjri (Indonesia). They were charged under the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act for allegedly attempting to incite unrest in country, tried without benefit of an attorney, convicted, and sentenced to five years in prison at a court in Insein Prison, Rangoon. However, the foreign activists were deported to Thailand later that day.

2.11. Denial of fair public trial

A number of prisoners are never charged or tried in Burma, and false criminal charges are sometimes brought against political prisoners as a means of discrediting them. The civilian courts in Burma do not guarantee a fair trial to anyone accused of a political offence, so trial verdicts offer no reliable indication of whether a prisoner is guilty of a recognizably criminal offence or simply of non-violent opposition to the SPDC.

Hundreds of political prisoners are held without charge or trial under administrative detention provisions. Those political prisoners who have been charged and brought before the court have been denied the right to the most basic elements of legal protection. The SPDC appoints justices to the Supreme Court who, in turn, appoint lower court judges with the approval of the SPDC. The SPDC's Judicial Law No. 2/88 of September 1988 bases judicial procedures on international standards, but in practice the civilian judiciary cannot maintain its independence under pressure from the military authorities. Although the procedures stipulated for use in civilian courts appear to conform to international standards for fairness, the civilian judiciary is in practice subject to intimidation from the military authorities sufficient to undermine its independence. Furthermore, the restrictions placed on political prisoners' access to legal counsel deny them any real opportunity to prepare a proper defense. In most political cases, trials are held in courtrooms in prison compounds and are not open to the public. In these instances, defense counsel appears to serve no purpose other than to provide moral support, since reliable reports indicate that verdicts are dictated by higher authorities. Political detainees are held incommunicado for long periods. Even after being charged, detainees rarely have benefit of counsel.

In August 1998, the military authorities detained a group of 18 foreign activists for

allegedly distributing anti-SPDC leaflets; they were charged, tried without benefit of an attorney, convicted, and sentenced to five years in prison. However, the foreign activists were deported later that day.

In December 1997, the SPDC commuted the sentences of those prisoners who were serving terms longer than 10 years. The SPDC reduced the sentences of approximately 60 students and political prisoners who were arrested between 1988 and 1992, making them eligible for release within the next few years. However, some political prisoners remain in custody after the completion of their original sentence.

2.12 Life in prisons

Prison conditions in Burma fall far short of international standards (e.g. the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners and the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment). International and humane standards and procedures for the detention of prisoners promulgated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have been rejected. The SPDC continuously rejects the ICRC standing requirements for visits to places of detention, including meeting prisoners in private, having access to all prisoners, and the assurance of repeat visits.

Prisoners are denied adequate food and health care. Most political prisoners are suffering from gastric ulcers, diarrhea, dysentery, lung diseases or skin diseases. Conditions in the prisons allow for the easy transmission of these diseases due to poor sanitation, unclean and semi-cooked food, dirty kitchens, polluted surroundings and a lack of personal hygiene (particularly because of poor water supplies). There is also growing AIDS problem in Burmese prisons.

The prisoners are very often forced to sleep on cold cement floors, and many of them suffer from sickness and serious diseases. Cells are often overcrowded and prisoners are denied adequate hygiene. In most prisons, prisoners are unable to get enough medical treatment. In 1993, there was no doctor at the Thayet Prison hospital. Ko Aik Ko, a member of ABFSU, received inappropriate treatment during his illness from one of the staff of the prison hospital and subsequently died. (**Source: ABFSU**)

Torture techniques, including beatings, often to the point of unconsciousness; being forced to crawl over sharp stones or shivers of glass; and being held in the hot sun for prolonged periods, are commonly practiced. Such tactics and others are used by the SPDC security forces to punish and intimidate prisoners. Political prisoners are subjected to torture during both the initial interrogation period and after they have been sentenced. Once imprisoned, prisoners can be summoned at any time during the day or night by Military Intelligence (MI) personnel, who maintain a permanent presence in most of the prisons in Burma. Political prisoners who break arbitrary and harsh prison rules are subjected to even harsher punishments. Even the possession of almost any reading material is a punishable offense under prison rules. Political prisoners are often sent to "military dog cells," extremely small cells where military dogs are normally kept, or to other cells where they are subjected to beating and placed in leg-irons made of chains with an iron rod between the feet.

Political prisoners are not allowed to communicate with one another and are often held in solitary confinement. They are generally only allowed for fifteen minutes every

two weeks; to meet their families after they have been sentenced, before that time they are held incommunicado. Guards are present throughout the family meetings and often take notes. Although families can bring food and medicine to their relatives, such supplies are sometimes confiscated by prison authorities. Religious writings that have received prior approval are sometimes allowed to be given to prisoners.

Hundreds of prisoners have been forced to work under extremely harsh conditions on infrastructure projects without being released at the completion of their prison terms. Convicts are taken from prisons to serve as porters, often shortly before their sentences are due to expire, and then forced to work under very poor conditions long after they should have been released from prison. According to a Thai prisoner released in late 1998 from Burma's prisons, Burmese inmates faced regular beatings, torture, infection from HIV-contaminated medical supplies or were sent to labor camps from which many never returned. "Myanmar tries to lessen overcrowding in its jails by sending prisoners to slave camps from which only 50 per cent returned," one Thai trader, who spent time in both Insein and Mandalay prisons, told the media upon his arrival back to Thailand. He said officials and fellow inmates had told him during his 10 month stay in Mandalay that at least 50 prisoners died in the prisons each month from sickness or beatings. "In May 1998, 500 prisoners were sent out to slave camps, but less than 100 returned. They looked like skeletons, not like human beings," said another ex-prisoner. Apparently, prisoners can avoid going to such camps if they pay large bribes to the prison authorities.

2.13. Transfer of political prisoners

The SPDC transfers political prisoners at will to remote prisons which their families are unable to visit and provide the prisoners with additional food and medicine. In recent years the military regime has frequently transferred political prisoners to different prisons throughout Burma. It is believed that this is done to prevent links forming between political prisoners, as well as between prisoners and prison staff.

On June 17, 1998, 14 political prisoners were transferred from Insein Prison to Myitkyina Prison in Kachin State in northern Burma. The prisoners included U Nyan Thaung, a member of the National League for Democracy (NLD), from Mayangon township in Rangoon.

The 14 were each sentenced to seven years' imprisonment shortly after a clash between NLD members and riot police in Mayangon township in Rangoon in October 1997, when NLD General Secretary Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was travelling to the NLD office in Mayangon township to see NLD youth members.

Also in Rangoon at the same time as the clash, three MPs from the NLD, Dr. Than Nyein, Dr. May Win Myint and Daw San San, plus a number of other NLD members, were arrested and each sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

There are currently about 30 political prisoners, including the group of 14 from Mayangon township, Rangoon, in Myitkyina Prison, according to sources in Rangoon. Prominent political prisoners including Dr. Zaw Myint Maung, Dr. Khin Zaw Win, Ko Htein Lin, Ko Kyi Pe Ko, Aung Naing Maw, U Hla Htun Aung, Chit Ko Ko and Khaing Zaw Oo are also in Myitkyina Prison. Three comedians in the prison detained for parodying the military regime are not allowed visits from family members; U Pa Pa Lay, U Htwe and

U Aung Soe were each sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for their criticism of the junta in 1996. (*Source: ABSDF*)

2.14. Death in prisons

U Thein Tin

U Thein Tin, a prominent member of the Rangoon Township Organizing Committee of the NLD, died at Rangoon General Hospital on the evening of February 18, 1998, following physical and mental torture in Insein Prison. He was detained in Insein Special Prison since March 1996 along with well-known leaders such as U Moe Thu, U Kyaw Min and U Soe Thein. He was charged under Section 10(a) of the State Protection Act, which is designed "to protect the country from the dangers of those who wish to harm the state." U Thein Tin, a writer by profession, was a former student leader during 1962. He came to prominence during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest for his management skills in the NLD. (*Source: ABSDF*)

Aung Kyaw Moe

Aung Kyaw Moe, aged 29, a former student of the Rangoon Institute of Technology, who had been sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment for his involvement in a December 1996 student demonstration, died in the prison hospital on May 23, 1998. He died after being beaten by prison authorities following a hunger strike by political prisoners at the Thayawaddy Prison, 200 km north of Rangoon. On May 22, political prisoners in Thayawaddy Prison staged a hunger strike to mark the eighth anniversary of the 1990 elections, in which the NLD had won a landslide victory. The political prisoners made demands: that the ruling SPDC treat them as political prisoners, and that it enter into a dialogue with the NLD to solve the country's problems peacefully. However, the authorities, under instructions from the SPDC's Ministry of Home Affairs, rejected their demands and warned the prisoners to stop their hunger strike immediately. When they refused to do so, eight political prisoners who were beaten got seriously injured. Afterwards, the family members of all the political prisoners at Tharawaddy Prison were forbidden to visit the prison in an attempt by the authorities to prevent news about the incident from spreading. (*Source: ABSDF*)

U Saw Win

NLD representative U Saw Win (aka U Kyaw Zaw Lin, 61, from Htilin township) who was elected to parliament in the 1990 election, died on August 7, 1998, from unknown causes in Thayawaddy Prison, 200 km north of Rangoon. He was arrested in 1991 for allegedly failing to transport logs in time while working on the construction of the Rangoon-Thanyin Bridge. He was given 10 years' imprisonment under the Public Property Protection Act and an additional one year imprisonment under Section 5(j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act.

The Election Commission dismissed U Saw Win as a Member of Parliament on December 12, 1991. The military regime twice promised to release U Saw Win from prison, once in 1992 and again in 1995, but failed to do so.

U Saw Win graduated in science from Rangoon University and in 1965 began working as a newspaper journalist. He later became an assistant editor at the *Botahtaung* newspaper and also worked for a government publishing house.

U Saw Win's body was cremated in secret by military authorities two days after his death on August 9, without the knowledge or presence of his family.

U Saw Win is the third NLD Member of Parliament to die in prison. U Tin Maung Win (Rangoon Division) died in 1991 and U Hla Than (Rangoon Division) died in 1996. U Saw Win's death also comes six months after the death in prison of Rangoon NLD Organizing Committee member U Thein Tin. (*Source: ABSDF*)

U Aung Min



U Aung Min, aged 53, a member of the organizing committee of Mandalay Northeast township, Mandalay Division, died on October 21, 1998 while he was under the detention at the IB 95 based in Mandalay. He was also in charge of Mandalay Division NLD office, Joint Secretary of the Northeast township and Chairman of Mawra Gewa ward. The statement issued by the SPDC said U Aung Min, had suffered from cancer of the lymph glands which had spread all over his body while in a Defence Services Hospital in Mandalay. He was arrested by the Military Intelligence and imprisoned at the IB 95 in September, 1998. No family visit was allowed during his detention. He became ill while in custody and refused medicine offered to him by the arresting authorities. Dr. Htay

Hlaing, another NLD member, was his companion in custody and he requested medical treatment for U Aung Min but the doctor was himself unwell and had no medical facilities to enable him to attend to his needs. On October 21, U Aung Min's wife, Daw Thwe Thwe San, was informed by the same MI officers that U Aung Min had died on the evening of October 21. His body was cremated at the Kyanikan Cemetery on October 23. His family was given three sacks of rice and one tin of cooking oil as a donation by the IB 95, but they rejected whatever assistance offered them by the military. (*Source: HRDU*)

2.15. Health concern for the political prisoners

Failure to provide for the daily requirements of the NLD members who are being detained resulted in the premature death of one member in Mandalay in October 1998. The arresting authorities in Mandalay who are holding members of the NLD in their custody are not providing proper food for them. The daily fare consists of fried rabbit greens, aubergines and lentils poorly cooked without oil and salt. The food is of the poorest quality.

The following NLD MPs are being fed with a very poor diet consisting only of vegetables, and their health is deteriorating as of December 1998:

U Hla Win	No (2) Constituency, Pakkoku township, Magwe Division
Dr. Kyi Min	No (1) Constituency, Pakkoku township, Magwe Division
U Tha Maung	No (2) Constituency, Oakpho township, Pegu Division
U Tin Oo,	No (1) Constituency, Oakpho township, Pegu Division

The situation concerning U Win Tin



U Win Tin has been in prison since July 4, 1989 and is not due for release until 2008. He is 68 years old and suffers from heart disease. A founding member of the NLD, he was arrested during a crackdown on the opposition and has been sentenced at different times to a total of 19 years' imprisonment. One accusation against him was that he had urged the NLD to adopt a civil disobedience campaign against martial law. On March 28, 1996, his prison sentence was increased by five years for allegedly attempting to smuggle a letter out of Insein Prison, the country's main detention facility in Rangoon. U Win Tin and 20

others were sentenced under Section 5(e) of the Emergency Provisions Act and under the Penal Code for the alleged misappropriation of State property. None of the detainees was permitted legal representation at the trials, which were held in prison. U Win Tin's letter describing the poor conditions was addressed to the UN Special Rapporteur on Burma, whose mandate is to investigate and report on human rights in the country. His other punishment for this "crime" was to be held for several weeks in a small cell designed for military dogs, before being transferred to solitary confinement.

The Situation of Daw San San

Daw San San is back in prison after allegedly breaching the conditions of an amnesty under which she was released in 1992. Daw San San, who is 58, had been elected as an NLD MP in the May 1990 elections. She was one of the many MPs arrested in late 1990 and early 1991 for discussing what steps to take if the military authorities continued to refuse to cede power. She was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment, but released under a limited amnesty for political prisoners on May 1, 1992. Since that period of detention, the SPDC dismissed her as a MP-elect and banned her from contesting any future elections. On October 28, 1997, she was arrested again after she had conducted an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation in June 26, 1997, in which she was critical of the military regime. She was arrested under section 10(a) of the 1975 State Protection Act, but in April, 1998, she was charged under the 1923 Official Secrets Acts and sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment. Daw San San is a leader of the NLD women's group.

The situation of U Ohn Myint

U Ohn Myint, who is 81, was taken by security officers for questioning just before midnight on February 1998. He is an advisor to the NLD party and was also a friend of the late General Aung San, the Burmese national independence hero. For several weeks nobody knew where he was. He was accused of helping to produce a history of the students' movement. By May 1998 he had been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. He had previously been detained between June 1989 and April 1993.

The situation of Moe Kalayar Oo

Moe Kalayar Oo was one of more than 50 mostly young people arrested in February 1995 at the funeral of U Nu, the first elected prime minister of Burma. Security forces began to make arrests at his funeral when some of the young people present delivered a eulogy in his honor. Moe Kalayar Oo was one of those who sang the eulogy and also made a speech. She was sentenced with two other women and six men to seven years' imprisonment in April 1995. At the time of her arrest, she was a 25-year-old philosophy student at Rangoon University. Because of sleeping on the concrete floor of the prison in every night, she suffered from lung disease. No medicine was given to her and she asked the prison authorities to let her accept the medicine from her family. The authority refused her request and sent her to her cell. At present, she is in solitary confinement. (*Source: ABFSU*)

The situation of Ko Myat San

Ko Myat San, currently in Taungoo Prison, was a leading member of tri-coloured student groups and also a guard of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in 1989. He was arrested again during the December 10 student movements in 1991 and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. In 1998, he was sent to the prison hospital from Cell No. 3 as he was suffering from gastric ulcers. As there was a lack of medicine in the prison, his family asked the authorities to refer him to the local hospital for medical treatment. The prison authorities refused this. (*Source: ABFSU*)

The situation of Kyaw San (aka Cho Saint)

Kyaw San was an active member of All Burma Federation of Students Unions. He was arrested during the 1996 December students' movement and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. He was so seriously tortured at the interrogation center of Military Intelligence Service that he suffered from a nervous break down at Tharawaddy Prison. During his serious mental condition, he was never permitted to meet his family. (*Source: ABFSU*)

The situation of Toe Toe Tun

Toe Toe Tun was a leading member of All Burma Federation of Students Unions. He was arrested during the 1996 December student demonstrations and sentenced to a long-term imprisonment. He was seriously tortured at the interrogation center of MIS. Although

his health broke down, he did not receive enough medicine or medical treatment. (Source: ABFSU)

The situation of Ye Naing Win

Ye Naing Win was a leading member of Democratic Party for New Society (DPNS). He was arrested during the 1996 student demonstrations and sentenced to long-term imprisonment. He was suffering from liver disease but refused medical treatment. (Source: ABFSU)

The situation of Phyo Min Thein

Phyo Min Thein, a leading member of All Burma Federation of Students Unions (Lower Burma) was sentenced to a long-term imprisonment and is kept in Taungoo Prison. At present, his health has been deteriorating. He was among the 21 political prisoners who were sentenced under section 5(e) of the Emergency Provisions Act and under the Penal Code for the alleged misappropriation of State property for their attempt to send a letter about poor prison conditions to the UN Special Rapporteur on Burma. (Source: ABFSU)



On August 9, 1998, one day after the tenth anniversary of democracy uprising in 1988, the SPDC detained a group of 18 foreign activists for distributing anti-government leaflets in Rangoon. In photo, after deported 18 foreign activists to Thailand, they were holding a press conference in Bangkok.

Appendix I: List of political prisoners in Mandalay Prison

No	Name	Case	Sentence	Remark
1	Chit Ko Ko	5(J)	7 years	
2	Aung Moe Htun	5(J), 17/ 20	14 years	
3	Nay Win Hlaing	5(J)	7 years	
4	Ye Mon Kyaw	5(J), 17/20	14 years	
5	U Kyaw Myint	5 (J)	28 years	
6	Sai Kyaw Nyunt	5 (J)	7 years	
7	Tin Zar Moe Myint	5 (J)	7 years	
8	Aung Soe Min	5 (J)	21 years	
9	Thet Khaing	5 (J)	31 years	
10	Ma Kyi Kyi Win	5 (J)	7 years	
11	Ma Zin Mar Aung	5 (J)	12 years	
12	Ma Myat Sanpe Moe	5 (J), 17/20	14 years	
13	Ma Lae Lae Cho	5 (J)	7 years	
14	Ma Khin Cho Myint	5 (J)	7 years	
15	Aung Than Naing Soe	5 (J)	7 years	
16	Rajue Ne Myint	5 (J)	7 years	
17	Tin Aung Myint	5 (J)	7 years	
18	Htun Myint Aung	5 (J)	17 years	
19	Aye Thaug	5 (J)	45 years	
20	Khun Sine	5 (J)		
21	U Tin Aye	5 (J)	21 years	
22	U Maung Maung Kyaw Aye	5 (J)	21 years	
23	Ko Lin Lin			
24	Ko Zaw Min Htun			
25	Ye Myint Oo		31 years	
26	Moe Zaw Bo (a) Bo Bo		7 years	
27	Moe Zaw Aung	5 (J)	7 years	
28	Swe Win		14 years	
29	Cham Myint Win		7 years	
30	Kyi Thar Nyein		14 years	
31	Zaw Zaw Aung		7 years	
32	Ko Ko Maung		7 years	
33	Kyi Thar Htun		21 years	
34	Kyaw Min Thet		14 years	
35	Ko Wuna		7 years	
36	Ko Soe Lwin			
37	U Shwe Htoo	124 (D), 5/17(1), 19 (B)	42 years	Private Teacher
38	Ko Maung Maung	124 (D), 17(1)	25 years	

39	Ko Soe Moe Naing	5/5 (J), 17(1)	24 years	
40	Ko Yin Mon	17(2) (B), 5 (J)	21 years	
41	Ko Kyaw Nyunt	124 (D)	20 years	Student
42	Ko Yan Naing Min	124 (D)	20 years	Student
43	Ko Sein Lin	124 (D)	20 years	
44	Ko Moe Kyaw Thu	124 (D)	20 years	
45	Ko Khin Maung Tint	124 (D)	20 years	
46	Ko Moe Kyaw	5 (J), 17 (1)	10 years	
47	Ko Cham Aye	5 (J), 17 (1)	10 years	
48	Ko Htin Lin	5(J)		
49	Ko Yar Kyaw	5 (J)	7 years	
50	Ko Ye Lin	5 (J)	7 years	
51	Dr. Soe Than Maung		7 years	
52	Kyaw Win Swe Zin	5 (J)	7 years	
53	Moe Zaw Htun	5 (J)	7 years	
54	Mya Thaung	5 (J)	7 years	
55	Than Swe	5 (J)	7 years	
56	Zaw Zaw Lin	5 (J)	7 years	
57	Than Htun Maung	5 (J)	7 years	
58	San Nay Lay	5 (J)	7 years	
59*	U Weat Mala	17(1)	3 years	Monk
60	Ma Soe Khaing	5 (J), 17 (1)	10 years	
61	Ma Ohn Mar	5 (J)	7 years	
62	Ma Tin Mar Ye	5 (J)	7 years	
63	U Khin Maung Thaung	5 (J)	7 years	NLD
64	U Tin Maung Aye	5 (J)	7 years	Broker
65	U Aung Kyi	5 (J)	7 years	Artist
66	U Kyaw Htay	5 (J)	7 years	Government Servant
67	U Kyi Aung	5 (J)	7 years	Government Servant
68	U Kyaw Thaung	5 (J)	7 years	NLD
69	U Hla Soe	5 (J)	7 years	NLD
70	U Sein Myint	5 (J)	7 years	NLD
71	U Tin Aung	5 (J)	7 years	NLD
72	U Maung Maung Thaung	5 (J)	7 years	NLD
73	U Khun Myint Htun	5 (J)	7 years	Mon MP
74	U Do Htaung	5 (J)	7 years	MP of Kalay Township
75	U Ba Min	5 (J)	7 years	NLD
76	Ko Win Naing	5 (J)	7 years	Student
77	Ko Tin Hlaing	5 (J)	7 years	NLD
78	U Zawtibala	5 (J)	7 years	Masoeyeim Taik Haung
79	U Than Htaik	5 (J)	7 years	NLD

80	U Pwa	5 (J)	7 years	Government Servant
81	U Tin Htoo	5 (J)	7 years	Government Servant
82	Dr. Khin Mar Kyi	5 (J)	7 years	Doctor, (Mon Ywa)
83	Daw Khin San Aye	5 (J)	7 years	Vendor
84	U Sein Maung	5 (J)	7 years	Vendor
85	U Myo Thant	5 (J)	7 years	Merchant
86	U Wuna Maung	5 (J)	7 years	Private Teacher
87	U Htun Aung Kyaw	5 (J)	7 years	Private Teacher
88	U Myo Naing	5 (J)	7 years	NLD, Mandalay
89	U Kyaw Nyein	5 (J)	10 years	NLD
90	U Myint Naing		12 years	ABSDF (Western)
91	Daw Hnin Pa Pa	5(J)	5 years	NLD, MDY
92	Daw Myaing	5(J)	5 years	NLD, MDY
93	Ma Yu Yu Haling		7 years	
94	Ma Khin Than Aye		5 years	

Arrested list of the cases of Maha Myat Muni Pagoda

No.	Name	Case	Sentence	Remark
1*	U Thu Zarta (U Thaug Htay)		7 years	Masoeym Taik Haung
2*	U Thar Thana (U Thein Pe Myint)		7 years	Masoeym Taik Haung
3*	U Dama Thiri (U Htun Myint Aung)		7 years	Masoeym Taik Haung
4*	U Thu Thana (U Thein Htaik)		7 years	Masoeym Taik Haung
5*	U Nyanna Thiri (U San Maung)		7 years	Masoeym Taik Haung
6*	U Teza Wuntha (U Aung Than)		7 years	Pattamya Taik
7*	Shin Zawti Yaza (U Zaw Min)		7 years	Pattamya Taik
8*	U Than Wara (U Than Win)		7 years	Nande Tena Taik
9*	U Kei Thaya		7 years	Nande Tena Taik
10*	U Mahaw Thahta		7 years	Masoeym Taik Haung
11*	U Sekka Pala (U Soe Myint)		7 years	Masoeym Taik Haung
12*	Shin San Neinda (U San Thun Aung)		7 years	Masoeym Taik Haung
13*	U Nein Mala		7 years	Masoeym Taik Haung

Arrested list of activists in Mandalay Prison

No.	Name	Case	Sentence	Remark
1*	U Thoun Nandaya (U Than Aung)			
2*	U Wan Thami (U Tin Win)			
3*	U Sekka Pala (U Soe Myint)	5 (J)		
4*	U Mahaw Thada (U Tin Win)	5 (J)		
5*	U Nyana Thire (U San Maung)	5 (J)		
6*	U Keithara (U Aung Naing Oo)	5 (J)		
7*	U Zande (U San Htun Aung)	5 (J)		
8	Zaw Min	5 (J)		
9	Sai Myo Myint	5 (J)		
10	Ye Myint	5 (J)		
11	Win Khaing	5 (J)		
12	Thant Zin Aye	5 (J)		
13	Tin Htun Aung	5 (J)		
14	Win Min Thant	5 (J)		
15	Yin Htun	5 (J)		
16	Tin Hlaing	5 (J)		
17	Khin Maung Tint	505		
18	Khin Maung Win	505		
19	Maung Oo	505		
20	Tin Htun	505		
21	Lauk San	505, 17(1)		
22	Win Cho	505, 17(1)		
23	Win Myint Oo	505, 17 (1)		
24	Thein Han	505, 17 (1)		
25	Aung Kyaw Moe	505, 17 (1)		
26	U Kaw Wida	505, 17 (1)		
27	Shauk Chein	17 (1)		
28	Aik Khin	17 (1)		
29	Win Bo	17 (1)		
30	U Than Win	17 (1)		

31	U Than Lwin	17 (1)		
32	Maung Sein	17 (1)		
33	Than Oo	Video Case		
34*	U Wei Ponla (U Win Myint)	5 (J), 17(1)(2),21 (D)	45 years	
35	U Htun Ohn	4 (B)	10 years	
36	Maung Myat	17(1), 119 (D), 436	30 years	
37	Maung Than Win	17 (1), 119 (D), 436	30 years	
38	Ko Nay Myo	17 (2)	5 years	
39	Thet Naing Aung	17 (1)	3 years	
40	Than Nyunt	17 (1)	10 years	
41	Zaw Yar	17 (1)	20 years	
42	Thida	12 (1)	Sentence to Death	
43	Labya Naw	17 (1), 4 (J)	10 years	
44	U San Myint	505 (B)	2 years	
45	Maung Maung Aung	505	1 years	
46	Ko Thein Soe	505	2 years	
47	Maung Naing	505	2 years	
48	U Poe Aye	5 (J)	7 years	Irrawaddy Division Farmers' Case
49	Nyi Nyi Win	302, 505 (B)	10 years	
50	Shauk Wa	386	14 years	
51	U Pe Aung	198, 465	5 years	
52	U Kyaw Htay	198, 465	5 years	
53*	U Dhama Thiri	5 (J)	7 years	
54*	U Thu Zata (U Thaung Htay)	5 (J)	7 years	
55*	U Nein Mala	5 (J)	7 years	
56*	U Tha Thana	5 (J)	7 years	
57*	U Teza Wuntha	5 (J)	7 years	
58*	U Than Waya	5 (J)	7 years	
59*	U Pyinnya Daza	5(J)s	2 years	
60	Maung Maung Myint	505(B)	7 years	

Political Prisoners in Hospitalization

No.	Name	Case	Sentence	Remark
1	Htun Aung Kyaw	5 (J)	7 years	
2	Myo Thant	5 (J)	7 years	
3	U Tin Maung Aye	5 (J)	7 years	
4	U Aye Myint	5 (J)	7 years	
5	Myint Maung Maung	5 (J)	7 years	
6	Tint Swe	505	7 years	
7	U Sein Ohn	Video Case	7 years	
8	Aung Aung	5 (J)	7 years	
9	Aung Nay Myo	5 (J)	7 years	
10	Myo Htoo	5 (J)	7 years	
11	Nyi Nyi Htway	5 (J)	7 years	
12	Sein Hlaing Htun	5 (J)	7 years	
13	Ye Lin Aung	5 (J)	7 years	
14	Thet Htun Aung	5 (J)	7 years	
15	Sein Win	5 (J)	7 years	

From No. 1 to No. 8 people are medical, arts and science university students.

Political Prisoners In Mandalay Prison (1989-90)

No	Name	Arrested Date	Convicted Date	Years
1	U Tin Myint	12. 7. 89	31. 10. 89	10 years
2	U Tin Aye Kyu	12. 7. 89	31. 10. 89	10 years
3	U Naing Myint (a) Myint Soe	12. 7. 89	1. 11. 89	16 years
4	U Htay Thein	12. 7. 89	1. 11. 89	10 years
5	U Kyaw Sein Lwin	12. 7. 89	1. 11. 89	14 years
6	U Ne Win	12. 7. 89	1. 11. 89	15 years
7	U K0 Ko Naing	12. 7. 89	1. 11. 89	14 years
8	U Tin Aye	12. 7.89	1. 11. 89	10 years
9	U Soe Myint	12.7.89	1. 11. 89	10years
10	U Tun Oo	12. 7.89	1. 11. 89	10 years
11	U Htay Nyunt	12. 7. 89	1. 11. 89	14 years
12	U Thein Than Oo	16. 11. 90	5. 2. 91	10 years
13	U Zar Ni Aung	16.11. 90	5. 2. 91	10 years
14	U Khin Maung Than	16. 11. 90	5. 2. 91	10 years
15	U Aung Aung	16. 11. 90	5. 2. 91	10 years
16	U Tin Htay	16. 11. 90	5. 2. 91	10 years
17	U Zaw Min	12. 7. 89	1. 11. 89	10 years
18	U Thein Zaw	12. 7. 89	1. 11. 89	10 years

* Buddhist Monks

(Source: HRDU)

Appendix II Arrested List of Political Prisoners

Name	Case	Dt. of Ar:	Prison	Sentence	Org:	Address
Aung Myat Thu	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Aung Soe	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Aung Soe Min	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Aung Khin	5J, 17/1	1989	Taungoo	20 years	BCP	
Aung Klaine	5J	21.1.1997	Insein	10 years	student	South Okkalar, Rangoon.
Aung Khine	5J, 17/1	1991	Taungoo	15 years		Prome, Pegu
Aung Ko Ko	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	Sanchaung, Rangoon.
Aung Kyaw Htwe	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth	
Aung Kyaw Moe	5J	1996	Taungoo	7 years	student	Tamwe, Rangoon
Aung Lwin Oo	5J, 19/F		Myingyan	20 years		
Aung Moe Tun	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	Thingangyun, Rangoon.
Aung Myat Htut	5J, 17/1		Myingyan	20 years		
Aung Naing	5J, 19/F		Myingyan	20 years		
Aung San Myo	5J	1991	Insein	10 years	NLD youth	Kamaryut, Rangoon
Aung Tun	5J, 17/1	Jan-1998	Insein	14 years	student	Kyauktada, Rangoon.
Aung Zaw Moe	5J	23.1.1997	Insein	7 years	student	
Aung Zaya	5J	1995	Taungoo	7 years	DPNS	Shwebo, Sagaing
Aye Aung	5J, 17/1	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Aye Htun	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	Hlaing, Rangoon.
Aye Htut	5J	Nov-1998	Insein		ABFSU	3 rd year, Geology, RASU.
Aung Lwin	5J	1996		7 years		
Aye Naing	5J	Dec-1996	Tarawady	7 years	student	
Aye Than	5J	Dec-1996		7 years	student	Kyeemyindin, Rangoon
Ba Htoo Maung	5J	21.6.1994	Myingyan	20 years		
Bala Gyi	5J, 17/1	1989	Taungoo	15 years		Rangoon
Bo Bo	5J, 17/1	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	NLD	Bahan, Rangoon.

Bo Bo Han	SJ	1991	Taungoo		ABFSU	Insein, Rangoon
Bo Lay		Oct, 1993	Taravaddy	20 years	tri-col;	Lamadaur, Rangoon
Chan Nyein Win	SJ	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Chit Min Lay	SJ, 17/1	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	Latter, Rangoon
David Hla Myint		1997			NLD - MP	
Dr. Mg Mg Kyaw	SJ	Feb-1998	Insein	7 years		Botataung, Rangoon.
Dr. Than Aung		1995			NLD - MP	Mingalataungnyunt, Rangoons
Dr. Than Nyein		1997			NLD - MP	Kyauk Tan, Rangoon.
Dr. Tin Min Htut		1998			NLD - MP	Iravaddy
Hla Nyeinui		1991			NLD youth	Bahan, Rangoon
Hlaing Myat	SJ	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Htay Aung	SJ	Dec-1996	Basein	7 years		
Htay Aung	SJ	Dec-1998	Basein	7 years	student	
Htay Lin		1996			NLD youth	Hlaingaryar, Rangoon
Htet Aung	SJ	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Htoo Gwai	122/1	1983	Teyet	life sentence		
Htun Myint Aung	SJ, 17/1	1998	Insein	21 years		
Htun Zaw Zaw		1998			NLD youth	Moulmein, Mon State.
Htwe Maw	SJ	1993	Insein			
Htwe Maw		1994		7 years		Kamaryut
Kalaray	SJ	23.1.97	Insein	7 years	student	
Khin Hlaing		1997			FTUB	
Khin Hling	SJ, 17/1	Jan-1998	Insein	death sent.	teacher	North Okkalar, Rangoon.
Khin Maung Myint		1997			NLD youth	Latter, Rangoon.
Khin Maung Oo	SJ	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth	
Khin Ko		Dec-1996			NLD youth	Insein
Khin Myint Tun		1995			NLD - MP	Mon state
Ko Aung Myint	SJ, 17/1	1997		7 years		Yankin, Rangoon.
Ko Cho Aung Than	VA4, 5E	1997		10 years		Yankin, Rangoon.

Ko Hmaing	5J	1991	Taungoo	15 years	ABFSU	Rangoon.
Ko Htay		1997			NLD youth	North Okkal, Rangoon
Ko Khon Sai	5J, 17/1	Apr-1998		7 years		Sanchaung, Rangoon
Ko Ko Aung		1991			NLD youth	South Okkal, Rangoon.
Ko Ko Gyri	5J	Dec-1991	Tayet	20 years	ABFSU	South Okkal, Rangoon.
Ko Ko Maung	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth	
Ko Mg Mg	5J, 17/1		Myingyan	20 years		
Ko Moe Win	5J, 17/1	1989	Taungoo	10 years		Tanwe, Rangoon.
Ko Myint Soe		1994				North Okkal, Rangoon.
Ko Myint Swe		1997			NLD	Yankin, Rangoon.
Ko Ngwe Lin	5J, 17/1	Dec-1996	Tarawady	7 years	DPNS	
Ko Nyein Myint	5J, 17/1	Dec-1996	Tarawady	7 years	BCP	
Ko San Ni		1997			NLD	Mingalataungdaung, Rangoon.
Ko Sein Hlaing	5J, 17/20	1990	Insein			Sanchaung, Rangoon.
Ko Thein	5J, 17/1	Feb-1998	Insein	death sent.	ABSD	
Ko Thiba	5J, 17/1	Dec-1996	Insein	7 years	student	Prome Rd., Rangoon.
Ko Thiba	5J	Dec-1996	Insein	7 years	NLD	
Ko Toe Toe Htun	5J, 17/1	Dec-1996	Tarawady	7 years	ABFSU	Myaung Mya, Inawaddy
Kyaw Aye	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Kyaw Hein	5J	1990	Moulemein	life sentence	student	Moulemein university
Kyaw Htwe	5J	1995		7 years		Mingalataungnyunt, Rangoon
Kyaw Khine	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth	
Kyaw Min Than	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Kyaw Nyunt	5J, 17/1	July-1998	Mandalay	20 years	DPNS	Mandalay
Kyaw San	5J, 17/1	Dec-1996	Tarawady	7 years	ABFSU	
Kyaw Soe	5J	1996		7 years	NLD youth	Sanchaung, Rangoon.
Kyaw Sva Swe	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Kyaw Wana	5J	Apr-1998	Insein	7 years	student	Dawpon, Rangoon.
Kyaw Zaw	5J, 17/1	Feb-1998	Myitkyina	10 years	student	Hlaing, Rangoon.

Kyi Soe		1997				NLD youth	Sanchaung, Rangoon.
Kyi Tha Nyein	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	14 years		student	
Kyi Tha Oo	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	14 years		student	
Kyi Tha Tun	5J	Nov- 1998	Insein	14 years		student	
Kyi Tin Oo	5J, 17/1	1994	Insein	10 years			Hlaing, Rangoon.
Kyi Tun	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	14 years		student	
Lat Yar Tun	5J, 17/1	Feb- 1998	Insein	death sent		student	
Lat Yar Win	5J	21.1.1997	Bassein	7 years		student	North Dagon, Rangoon.
Lin Tun	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	7 years		NLD youth	
Ma Yan Tee	5J, 19/F		Myingyan	20 years			
Maung Maung	5J, 17/1	Jul- 1998	Mandalay	20 years		DPNS	Mandalay
Maung Maung Oo	5J	Feb- 1995		7 years		student	Insein, Rangoon.
Maung Maung Wan	5J	1996		7 years		student	Yananchaung, Magwe
Mg Mg Kyaw Aye	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	7 years		NLD youth	
Min Han	122/1	1991	Taungoo	Life sentence		ABSD	Tamwe, Rangoon.
Min Ko Ko	5J	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years			
Min Ko Naing		23-3-1989	Insein	20 years		ABFSU	Thingangyun, Rangoon.
Min Nyein Chan	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	14 years		student	
Min Zaw	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	14 years		student	
Moe Hein Aung		Sep- 1998	Insein	38 years		student	Bahan, Rangoon.
Moe Kyo	5J	Dec- 1996	Tarawady	7 years		student	
Moe Mg Mg	5J	1995	Taungoo	7 years		student	Yankin, Rangoon.
Moe Myat Thu	5J	Feb- 1995		7 years		tri-col;	South Dagon, Rangoon.
Moe Zaw Oo		1990				NLD youth	Pabaetan, Rangoon.
Mon Gyi		16.1.1997	Taungoo	14 years		student	South Okkalat, Rangoon.
Mya Sein	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	7 years		NLD youth	
Myat San	5J	1991	Taungoo	20 years		tri-col;	Pabaetan, Rangoon.
Myat Soe	5J, 17/1	1991	Taungoo	10 years		DPNS	Taungoo
Myat Thura Kyaw	5J	Nov- 1998	Insein	14 years		student	Tanyin GTI

Myint Soe	122/1	1991	Tayet	10+8 years	NLD youth	Lamadaur, Rangoon.
Myo Aung	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Myo Khin		1997		7 years	NLD	Yankin, Rangoon.
Myo Kyaw	5J	June-1997	Myingyan	7 years	student	Kamaryut, Rangoon.
Myo Min Htike	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	14 years	student	
Myo Min Naing	5J	Dec- 1996	Myintkyina	7 years	student	North Okkala, Rangoon.
Myo Myint Nyein	5J, 17/20	Jun- 1995	Tarawaddy	7+7 years		Pazaundaung, Rangoon.
Myo Thant	5J, 17/1	1989	Taungoo			Insein
Myo YanNaungThein		Jun- 1997	Myingyan	7 years	student	
Naing Lin	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth	
Naing Lwin Cho	5J, 17/1	1989	Tayet	10 years		
Nay Myo Kyaw	5J	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years		
Nay Tin Myint	5J	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years		
Nay Tin Myint		Oct- 1993	Tarawaddy	20 years	student	South Dagon, Rangoon
Nay Win Naing	5J	Nov- 1998	Insein	14 years	student	Hlaing, Rangoon.
Ni Tuk Kyaw	5J	Sep- 1998		14 years	student	
Nyan Lin	5J	Sep- 1998		14 years	student	
Nyan Nyan Tun	5J	1991	Taungoo	15 years	ABFSU	
Nyein Chan	5J	Dec- 1996	Tarawaddy	7 years	student	
Nyi Nyi	5J	1996	Taungoo	7 years	student	Prome, Pegu
Nyi Nyi Kyaw	5J		Myingyan	8 years		
Nyi Nyi Oo	5J	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years		
Nyi Nyi Oo	5J	1989	Taungoo	life sentence	NLD	Tanyin, Rangoon
Pado Than Hla	122/1	1983	Tayet	life sentence		
Pae Ko Oo	5J	June-1997	Insein	7 years	student	
Phone Myint Aung	5J	Sep- 1998	Insein	14 years	student	Kyeemyindine, Rangoon
Phone Thet Pyain	5J	16.1.1997	Bassein	14 years	student	South Okkalat, Rangoon
Phyo Min Thein	5J, 17/1	1991	Taungoo	7+7 years	ABFSU	Tanyin, Rangoon.
Phyo Min Thein	5J, 17/1	Jan- 1991	Taungoo	7+7 years	ABFSU	Tanyin, Rangoon.

Sae Taw	122/1	1983	Tayet	life sentence		
Sai Si Thu	5J	Aug-1998	Insein	14 years	student	
San Aung	5J, 19/F		Myingyan	2+21 years		
San Ni Thein	17/1-2	1992	Moulmein	25 years		Mon state
San Tun Kyaw	5J	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years		
Sar Do Saw	122/1	1983	Tayet	life sentence		
Sat Aung Naing	5J, 17/1	Feb-1998	Taungoo	10 years	student	Thingangyun
Saw Pha Ywal	17/1	1991	Taungoo	10 years	KNU	Taungoo
Saw Tadi Shwe	17/1	1991	Taungoo	10 years	KNU	Taungoo
Saw Lay	122/1	1983	Tayet	life sentence		
Shwe Baw		1998			NLD youth	Tarkatha, Rangoon
Soe Lwin	5J	Feb-1998	Insein	7 years	student	Pazaungdawn, Rangoon
Soe Lwin	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth	
Soe Moe	5J, 17/1					Yankin, Rangoon
Soe Moe Naing	5J, 17/1	Jul-1998	Mandalay	20 years	DPNS	Mandalay
Soe Myint	122/1	1989	Tayet	20 years		
Soe Myint Aung	5J, 17/1	Dec-1996	Tarawaddy	7 years	student	
Soe Naing		1996			NLD youth	Pazaungdawn, Rangoon
Soe Naing		1996			NLD youth	Mayangon, Rangoon
Soe Taung	5J	16.1.1997	Taungoo	14 years	student	South Okkalar, Rangoon
Soe Than	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth	
Soe Tun	5J	Jun-1997	Myingyan	7 years	student	Hlaing, Rangoon
Tae Zar Moe Myint		Nov-1998	Insein	14 years	student	Insein GTI
Tatoe Kyaw	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student	Shwepaukkan, Rangoon
Taw Pon	17/1-2	1991	Moulmein	14 years	ABSD	Mon state
Tha Lin Tin	5J	17.1.1997	Bassein	14 years	student	North Dagon, Rangoon
Than Htay	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth	
Than Htay	5J	19-7-1994	Myingyan	20 years		
Than Htut Shain		1998			NLD youth	Tarkatha, Rangoon

Than Lwin Oo.	SJ	1991	Taungoo	15 years		NLD youth	Agan, Prome, Pegu.
Than Soe		1997					Kamaryut, Rangoon
That Naing Oo	SJ	Sep- 1998	Insein	14 years		student	
Thaung Kyi	SJ	Sep- 1998	Insein	7 years		NLD youth	
Thaw Htun Oo	SJ	1996	Taungoo	7 years		student	Mayangon, Rangoon
Thein Htay	SJ	Sep- 1998	Insein	7 years		NLD youth	
Thein Myint	SJ	Jun- 1997	Insein	7 years		student	
Thein Win	SJ		Insein			student	Pegu Division
Theingi Aung	SJ, 17/1	Dec- 1989	Tayet	15 years			
Thet Naing	SJ, 17/1	Feb- 1998	Insein	10 years		student	Kyindindaing, Rangoon
Thet Naing		1990				NLD youth	Pabaetan, Rangoon.
Thet Oo	SJ, 17/1	Dec- 1996	Tarawaddy	14 years		student	
Thet Oo		Oct- 1993		20 years		tri-col.	Lamadaung, Rangoon.
Thet Tun	SJ	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years			
Thet Win Aung	SJ, 17/1	Sep- 1998	Insein	52 years		student	
Thunt Naing		1998				NLD	Pazaungdaung, Rangoon
Thura	SJ	Sep- 1998	Insein	14 years		student	
Thura Aung	SJ	Sep- 1998	Insein	14 years		student	
Tin Aye	SJ	Sep- 1998	Insein	7 years		NLD youth	
Tin Aye		1997				NLD youth	North Okkalar, Rangoon
Tin Hla	SJ	1996		7 years		NLD youth	Mayangon, Rangoon
Tin Hlaing	SJ	1996		7 years		student	
Tin Hlaing	SJ	1995	Myingyan	8 years			
Tin Maung Oo		1998				NLD youth	Bahan, Rangoon
Tin Myo Htut	SJ	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years			
Tin Naing Tun	SJ	23.1.1997	Bassein	7 years			
Tin Than Oo	SJ	Feb- 1995		7 years		student	
Tin Tun Hlaing	SJ	1991	Taungoo	15 years		DPNS	
Toe Toe Tun	SJ, 17/1	Dec- 1996	Tarawaddy	7 years			

Tun Tun Win	SJ, 17/1	1991	Taungoo	10 years		Mandalay
Twin Lin Aung	SJ	Jun-1997	Insein	7 years	student	
U Aung Thu	SJ	19-7-1994	Myingyan	20 years		
U Aye Win		May-1996				Bahan, Rangoon
U Bin Zin	122/1	1983	Tayet	life sentence		
U Bo Aye		1996			NLD	HlaingTar Yar, Rangoon.
U Chit Khin		1998			NLD (MP)	Magwe, Magwe Division
U Han Sein	SJ	Oct-1993	Tarawaddy	20 years		Pabaetan, Rangoon
U Han Tin	SJ	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth	Kyaut Tan, Rangoon
U Hla Maung	SJ	19-7-1994	Myingyan	20 years		
U Hla Min		1996			NLD-MP	Lamadaw, Rangoon.
U Hla Shwe	SJ	Feb-1998	Insein	7 years		Thingangyun, Rangoon
U Khin Maung		1994			NLD	Kyauktada, Rangoon.
U Khin Maung	SJ	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years		
U Khin Maung Aye	SJ	Feb-1998	Insein	7 years	Lawer	
U Khin Maung Win	SJ	1991	Taungoo	20 years	NLD (MP)	Pegu Division.
U Kyaw Min	SJ	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth	Sanchaung, Rangoon
U Kyaw Mya	SJ, 17/1	1991	Taungoo	20 years	BCP	
U Kyaw Than		1994			NLD	Kyimyindine, Rangoon
U Kyi Myint	SJ	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years	NLD (MP)	
U Kyn Myint		1994			NLD (MP)	Latter, Rangoon.
U Kyn Thein	SJ	1996			NLD (MP)	
U Law Ale	122/1	1983	Tayet	life sentence		
U Man Gyaw Ni	SJ	1998			NLD (MP)	Irawaddy
U Man Nyunt	122/1	1983	Tayet	life sentence		
U Moe Thu	SJ	1996			NLD	Kyauktada, Rangoon.
U Myo Myint	SJ	Feb-1998	Insein	7 years	Lawer	
U Myo Myint	SJ		Taungoo		NLD	Tarawady, Pegu.
U Myo Myint	SJ		Taungoo	7 years	NLD	Mayangon, Rangoon.

U Myo Myint		Dec-1996				NLD	Karmayut, Rangoon.
U Nyunt Hlaing		1998				NLD (MP)	Bassein, Irrawaddy
U Ohn Kyin	5J	1991	Taungoo	20 years		NLD (MP)	Tingangyun, Rangoon.
U Pyawarawta	5J, 17/1	Jan-1998	Insein	14 years		Monk	Ahlon, Rangoon
U Sein Hla Oo		1994				NLD (MP)	Insein, Rangoon
U San Tin	5J	1990	Insein			NLD (MP)	Hlay Kun, Rangoon
U San Win	5J, 17/1	1991	Taungoo	10 years			
U Sandatiri	5J, 17/1	Feb-1998	Insein	7 years		Monk	Thingangyun, Rangoon
U Saw U Reh	17/1	18.12.96		17 years		NLD (MP)	Kayar State. death in custody
U Sein	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years		NLD youth	
U Shwe Htoo	5J, 17/1	Jul-1998	Mandalay	42 years		DPNS	Mandalay
U Soe Myint	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years		NLD (MP)	
U Soe Myint		1998				NLD	Tarkatha, Rangoon
U Soe Myint		1998				NLD (MP)	Min Bu, Magwe Division
U Tha Maung						NLD (MP)	Oak Po, Pegu Division.
U Than Htay	5J	19-7-1994	Myingyan	20 years			
U Than Min	5J	1993	Taungoo	39 years		NLD	Minglataungyun, Rangoon.
U Thaw Marx	122/1	1983	Tayet	life sentence			
U Tin Chaw		1998				NLD (MP)	Irrawaddy
U Tin Myint	122/1	1983	Tayet	life sentence			
U Tin Tun	5J	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years		NLD (MP)	
U Tin Tun		Oct-1993	Tarawaddy	20 years			Pabaetan, Rangoon
U Toe Bo	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years		NLD (MP)	
U Tun Aung Kyaw	5J	Jun-1995	Mandalay	7 years		NLD	
U Tun Tun Oo	5J	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years			
U Wi Tha	5J	1996				NLD (MP)	Kyauktada, Rangoon
U Win Htein	5J	1995	Myingyan	14 years			
U Win Htein		May-1996				NLD	Insein, Rangoon
U Win Taung		1997				NLD	Mayangon, Rangoon

U Zaw Min		1998				NLD	
U Zaw Win	5J, 17/1		Myingyan	8 years			
Wa Oo	5J	1997	Insein	7 years	student		
Win Aung	5J, 17/1	1991	Taungoo	20 years	BCP		Maymyo, Mandalay.
Win Htun	5J	1990	Moulemein	life sentence	student		Moulemein University.
Win Maung	5J, 17/1		Myingyan	20 years			
Win Myint	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth		
Win Myint Naing	5J, 17/1	1991	Taungoo	10 years	DPNS		Taungoo
Win Naing	5J	Nov-1998	Insein	14 years	student		Tanyin, GTI
Win Thaw	5J	1997	Taungoo	7 years			Tamwa, Rangoon
Win Thein	5J	1989	Insein	7+7 years	tri-col:		Kyeemindine, Rangoon
Win Thein	5J	1989	Taungoo	7+7 years	tri-col:		
Yan Aung Kyaw	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student		Pabaetan, Rangoon
Yan Aung Soe	5J, 17/1	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student		
Yan Gyi Aung	5J	1990	Moulemein	life sentence	student		Moulemein University.
Yar Kyaw	5J	1998	Mandalay	7 years	student		
Yar Pyat	5J, 17/1	Jul-1998	Mandalay	20 years	DPNS		Mandalay
Ye Kyaw Swa	5J, 17/1	Dec-1996	Taravady	19 years	ABFSU		
Ye Maw Htoo	5J, 17/1	Dec-1996	Taravady	14 years	ABFSU		
Ye Min Kyaw	5J	16.1.1997	Bassein	14 years	student		South Okkalar, Rangoon
Ye Myint Oo	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student		Pazaundaung, Rangoon
Ye Naing	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student		
Ye Naing Win	5J, 17/1	Dec-1996	Taravady	14 years	DPNS		
Yin Htwe		1989	Insein	20 years			
Zaw Han	5J	21-6-1994	Myingyan	20 years			
Zaw Min	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student		
Zaw Min Tun	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	7 years	NLD youth		Sanchaung, Rangoon
Zaw Myint Oo	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student		
Zaw Myo Oo	5J	Sep-1998	Insein	14 years	student		Pabaetan, Rangoon

Zaw Naing		1990				NLD youth	Mingalataungnyunt, Rangoon
Zaw Nyein Lat	5J	1997			7 years		Yankin, Rangoon
Zaw Sai Mon Ag	5J, 17/1		Myingyan		20+20 years		
Zaw Than Htike	5J, 17/1	Aug- 1998	Insein		14 years	student	Konsaytan, Rangoon
Zaw Win	5J, 17/1	1989	Taungoo		20 years	BCP	
Zaw Win	5J		Taungoo		7 years	NLD	Kyindaing, Rangoon
Zaw Win Thant	5J	1996	Taungoo		7 years	student	Hmawdaw, Rangoon
Zaw Win Thint		1997				NLD youth	Bahan, Rangoon
Zaw Zaw Aung	5J, 17/1	1989	Insein		10 years	ABFSU	North Okkala, Rangoon.

(Source: ABSFU)

3. Rights of the Child

3.1 Background

Burma ratified to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Children's Convention) on August 15, 1991 after acceding to the Convention on July 16, 1991. However, there has been little progress towards the implementation of the convention, and the fundamental problems which impede implementation have not changed. These include a total lack of the rule of law and accountability of relevant authorities, as well as draconian restrictions on freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Such restrictions prevent local reporting and monitoring of the human rights situation of children.

The SPDC promulgated its new Child Law on July 14, 1993 in order to "implement the rights of the child recognized in the Convention on the Rights of Child." Chapter V, Section 8 of the SPDC Child Law states that "the state recognizes that every child has the right to survival, development, protection and care, and to achieve active participation within the community." In order to ensure full implementation of the law, SLORC established of a National Committee on the Rights of the Child, chaired by the minister of social welfare, relief and resettlement. The Child Law was seen as a positive sign within the international community, temporarily improving SPDC's image; but the law is a farce. The actual treatment of children in Burma is contrary to the objectives and stated purpose of the Convention and the law itself. In light of the abhorrent and often inhumane conditions faced by Burmese children in their everyday lives, largely due to SPDC policies, the SPDC's efforts to win international respect ring hollow and insincere.

International standards which address child labor include ILO Convention 138 (minimum age for employment), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The ILO is currently drafting a new convention targeting the worst forms of child labor. Other relevant international instruments include the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, and the Slavery Convention. Burma has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and apparently supports the adoption of a new instrument on child labor by the ILO. Burma has signed but not ratified the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons. Burma is bound by the Slavery Convention and its optional protocols.

The situation of children in Burma and the daily practices used by the military regime have been well-documented by the human rights groups. These include abuses of international humanitarian law in ethnic minority areas; the use of children as porters for the army and the forcible relocation of tens of thousands of civilians; the recruitment of children under the age of sixteen into the armed forces, often forcibly; arbitrary arrest and detention, often without charge or trial; the routine abuse of children as unpaid laborers on government construction projects; the arrest of high school students for writing or distributing leaflets, or simply calling out slogans; and the use of forced labor.

32 The social and health situation of children in Burma

Burma is one of the world's least developed countries with per capita gross national product of about US\$220 million. The population is estimated to be 45 million, with approximately three quarters living in the seven more advanced divisions of the country, and the remaining one quarter living in the seven less developed ethnic minority states, according to the 1997 UNICEF report.

The unfavorable economic conditions in Burma have adversely affected the situation of its citizens. As the most vulnerable groups within society, children suffer the most. The declining economic situation often forces children out of school and into the workplace families need all the free hands they can get to survive in difficult economic conditions. In urban areas some families send their smallest children into the streets to beg, while many families in rural areas are handing their children over to procurers in return for down-payments of 5,000 *kyat* or more. Sometimes children flee the country to escape such hardships, with or without their families. Child prostitution among young females, especially those from the ethnic minority areas, who are sent or lured to Thailand, continues to be a major problem. The rising incidence of HIV infection has increased the demand for these supposedly 'safer' young sex workers.

Currently, around 65 percent of the Burmese population has access to basic health services, which explains the poor national health indicators. The national infant mortality rate in Burma was, in 1995, 105 for every 1,000 live births, with wide regional variations. This compares with 34 in Vietnam, 27 in Thailand and 11 in Malaysia. According to UNICEF, in 1997 as many as 37 per cent of young children suffer from protein-energy malnutrition, with 11 per cent being severely malnourished. Many diets are deficient in vitamin A, iron and iodine.

UNICEF reports that maternal mortality rates for 1990 were an astronomically high: 580 per 100,000 live births, compared with 80 in Malaysia and 10 in Singapore. Most maternal deaths in Burma are due to induced abortions, largely conducted clandestinely, and to unsanitary conditions. In addition, there is a widespread lack of essential medication, which contributes to the poor health of the population.

The situation of children in Burma has worsened under the present military regime. The clumsy shift to an open market economy has meant economic disruption for many families. In order to attract foreign investment and tourism, the regime has launched ambitious road building and other infrastructure construction projects which have involved massive use of forced labor, including child labor.

33 Education of children in Burma

Education and other social services for children in Burma have been grossly neglected since the regime has directed immense resources toward doubling the size of the military. While the SPDC claims that the education standards in Burma are being upgraded and that it has allocated extra expenditure for the education sector, the fact is that students are not staying in school. According to a recent UNICEF report, 39 percent of Burmese children are never enrolled in school, despite a widespread primary school network, and

only a paltry 25 percent ever complete the first five years of school. The overall rate of school drop-outs in Burma, especially among children under ten years of age, has drastically increased during the 1996-97 academic year.

Of the total number of high school students estimated to be attending school in Mon State's capital Moulmein in the 1997-98 academic year, over 20 percent are said to have not appeared in class at all, due to simple impoverishment on one hand and widespread disappointment with the chronic educational instability caused by the mismanagement by the ruling military regime on the other. Schoolteachers had previously estimated that at least 10,000 high school students (ninth and tenth grades) from the area would be coming to school at the beginning of the 1997-98 academic year. In practice, however, only 8,000 came to school. Most of those students missing school in this way were said to have to find jobs in order to support their impoverished parents. Some of them have reportedly left to the neighboring countries Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore in the hope of seeking better opportunities there.

The present ruling military regime, since it took over power through the ruthless and bloody massacre of thousands of peacefully-demonstrating pro-democracy students and people in 1988, has spent much time closing high schools and universities in the country, except for few months each year. The ruling military dictatorship, in constant fear of possible student uprisings against its misrule, has thus failed to open and run properly the schools and universities in the country. The military regime has also dismissed many qualified university teachers who were outspoken in expressing their unhappiness with its crackdown on the student-led peaceful democracy movement. It has ordered the remaining teachers to strictly control their students, forbidding them from taking part in any demonstrations against it in the future, threatening them that if the teachers fail to control their students, they will be subjected to legal action. At the same time, it has forced students' parents to sign formal agreements acknowledging they are responsible for keeping their children out of any opposition political activities.

Many Burmese children enjoy no childhood at all; they are simply put straight to work. The greatly increasing costs of living often render working people in Burma incapable of providing their children with an education, and thus a future. One working family member is no longer able to secure enough food for the whole family, forcing other family members, including school-aged children, into the work place.

If a family is fortunate enough to spare a school child from working, it must face the high cost of schooling. Although nominally free basic education is available in Burma, many compulsory fees force families to forego schooling for their children. At the beginning of the academic term, parents are required to pay many initial fees, including 200 *kyat* for a school registration fee, 200 *kyat* for school fundraising, 35 *kyat* for school sports fees, 200 *kyat* for renovations, and 200 *kyat* for a computer lab fee. In each township, many other fees are required throughout the academic school year, depending on the school's particular needs. Children who remain in school are faced with impediments beyond the numerous fees, including insufficient school supplies. Often, students are compelled to buy their text-books on the black market at extremely high prices. These fees have forced many working parents, especially those who have many children in school, to keep their children at home.

The SPDC uses the school system as a means of imposing discipline and control

over the general population. Many people in remote villages are afraid to send their children far away to a SPDC-run school. If villagers try to establish their own school, the authorities, invariably, shut it down. Existing schools that teach ethnic languages are often near conflict zones and are thus prime targets for attack from SPDC troops. Even government-run schools near conflict areas are often shut down because teachers flee the school when government military columns come near for fear they will be taken as porters. Since middle and high schools are an easy source for young porters, SPDC soldiers often surround the school and forcibly recruit porters there. As an additional method of controlling school children, teachers and parents must sign forms promising to keep their children from doing or saying anything against the State; if the child does anything objectionable to SPDC, the parents and teachers are then subject to arrest.

The money SPDC claims it uses to build and renovate schools has been extorted from the local population. The SPDC will often extort two to three times the amount it truly needs for a school to ensure it is profitable. In SPDC schools, all teaching must be in Burmese; no other languages may be taught or spoken. Ethnic children grow up illiterate in their own languages and ignorant of their own literature and culture.

Publicly, the SPDC maintains it supports different nationalities. Paragraph 118(b) of the SPDC's 1996 report to the UN Committee for Child's Rights states, "although there is no written curriculum in their languages, the nationalities have the right to pursue their own literature." In reality, publishing literature or periodicals in non-Burmese languages is virtually impossible in Burma.

All school teachers in Burma must periodically attend government-run 'refresher courses', where they are issued uniforms and military boots, and are forced to do military parade drills, shout slogans, and sit through SPDC lectures. Anyone who 'fails' the course loses his or her teaching job.

State high schools have been closed for several times as the regime seeks to prevent student protests from erupting. All universities and colleges remain closed throughout the whole of 1997.

34 Child soldiers

The Convention on the Right of Child states in Article 38 (2) that "State Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 15 years do not take a direct part in hostilities, and that, (3) State Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who had not attained the age of 15 years into their armed forces." There is no similar prohibition in the Child Law, but Burma's armed forces regulations prohibit the recruitment of boys under the age of 16.

There are no statistical or other data about the recruitment of children as soliders. However, since 1988 the size of the armed forces has more than doubled from 180,000 to around 400,000, anecdotal evidence suggests that in part this increase has been facilitated by the recruitment of boys aged 13 to 15 years old. Often this recruitment is forced, with whole villages or sections of towns being ordered to 'give' a number of boys to the army or face heavy fines. In other cases the coercion is less explicit but just as compelling. Often boys aged 14 to 16 are drawn in village quota lotteries. Once their names are drawn, unless their families can pay a huge sum of bribe money, the boys have no choice but to join the

army. The family is often further coerced into cooperating by being told they will be free of forced labor duties if the army “gets their son.” Army officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) are offered cash rewards of 500 *kyat* for any recruits they bring in; they usually target the youngest possible boys, about 13 to 14, because these boys are the easiest to coerce. Many young deserters have described how they were approached in the market or on the way home from school when they were 13 to 14 years old by soldiers or NCOs and offered the chance of adventure, a happy-go-lucky life, a snappy uniform, a gun, and the high-sounding sum of 750 *kyat* per month. All the boys had to do to get the trappings was to follow the soldiers to the recruiting center. Usually the boys are also told to lie and say that they are 18 when asked by the recruiting officer. It is obvious by looking at most of these boys that they are well under 18, but the recruiting officers never verify the age of the recruits. At the present time, the army has become so desperate for recruits it that will take anyone, regardless of age. In most cases, the boys’ families often do not know what has happened to their sons for a year or more. In many cases, the boys and/or their parents are illiterate, so they cannot even write home, and once at the front line, rank-and-file soldiers do not get home leave.

Some boys reportedly join the army from a military training scheme called the *Ye Nyunt Youth*. UNICEF officials have described a process of “informal conscription” for boys as young as 14. They have also identified a residential military camp in Kengtung, Shan State, where boys from the age of seven were recruited for a future life in the Burmese army. Human Rights Watch/Asia has reported that boys younger than 14 “are ‘adopted’ by the army and institutionalized as military recruits by the time they reach the age of 14.”

Many *Ye Nyunt* “recruits” are orphans, or boys who have been abandoned in front-line villages; others are street children or children captured from enemy positions. These boys reportedly receive political training, and instruction in loyalty to the government and the military. Eventually they are assigned to work in the army, either in intelligence units, or as security for high-ranking officers.

34.1 Army volunteers

Despite the widespread fear of the army, some young boys still volunteer for various reasons: being a soldier is the only job opportunity for most poor people in Burma today, and the only way the boys think they can help support their family instead of being a burden. These are attractions of a soldier’s life, the promise that a recruit’s family will be free from further forced labor, or, in many cases, when a family member has been beaten, tortured or arrested by SPDC, the boy hopes if he becomes a soldier this will not happen again. However, once in the army, the boy’s dreams are dashed and his childhood stolen. Most of their pay is stolen by their officers every month. Their families are still required to perform forced labor, and the boys must endure physical abuse and harm. Officers further exploit young boys by stealing and reselling food rations and medical supplies; boys have to go into villages and beg for or loot their own food. Officers order young soldiers to round up villagers for forced labor or face beatings and other punishments if they fail to return without the specified number of laborers. Out of fear for their safety and the safety of their families, the boys begin to abuse physically civilians in surrounding villages, forcibly removing them from their families and homes. Boys are not permitted any pleasurable

distractions. No newspapers or short-wave radios are permitted and letters to or from home are scrutinized carefully. If a boy writes home, complaining about the army, he is beaten with a cane or tied to a post in the hot sun all day without water. Leave is refused even for good reasons, and when his enlistment time is up after five years, the boy is generally told he cannot leave and is automatically re-enlisted.

It appears that child soldiers perform the same duties as adult soldiers. Human rights groups report that children serve in the front lines for much of their tenure in the army, and see military action by ages 14 or 15. Child soldiers have been ordered to round up porters and forced laborers, and to guard porters or prisoners. Former child soldiers have reported being ordered to beat and kill porters who can no longer work, and to execute villagers who are suspected of collaborating with enemy troops. One former child soldier estimated he had seen over 200 porters killed by soldiers while he was in the army. Child soldiers who disobey, or fail to carry out orders, may be severely beaten. Young soldiers are also beaten if they cannot keep up, if they are ill or injured, or if they cannot perform heavy work. "In extreme cases, child soldiers [have been] summarily executed . . ." Another abuse to which child soldiers are subjected is being drugged before going into battle. In battle situations, boy soldiers are often forced by the officers to drink alcohol or take drugs such as amphetamines or *myin say* (a powerful combination of amphetamines, caffeine, and opiates), which makes them mindless, sleepless, and aggressive.

In addition to their ordinary duties, child soldiers commonly have to work on projects such as brick making which brings in personal profit for their officers. Brick making for private profit is only one example of the widespread corruption in the military which has a severe impact on child soldiers. Many child soldiers report that their pay was constantly reduced. In some cases, officers reportedly charge "medical fees," yet most child soldiers report that medical care in the army is very poor. For example, child soldiers have reported officers ordering that wounded soldiers, often young men or boys, be left behind or killed. One reason for poor medical care is that officers in some units sell medicines on the black market. Corruption in the army also affects the availability of both food and clothing. These conditions of work often compel child soldiers to attempt desertion. This is doubly dangerous, as they may be followed by their own troops, or they may encounter enemy troops. Some child soldiers simply commit suicide.

35. Child forced labor

Child labor appears to be common in Burma, and is associated with a lack of investment in education for primary school age children and with widespread poverty. Despite a compulsory education law, almost 40 percent of children never enroll in school, and only 25 to 35 percent complete the five-year primary school course. Many families cannot afford to pay the numerous fees for primary school education, which together impose substantial costs. Children working in the urban informal sector in Rangoon and Mandalay often start work when very young. The SPDC continues to force citizens, including women and children, to work as porters, which leads to mistreatment, illness, and sometimes death in military operations against armed ethnic groups. The SPDC does not specifically prohibit forced and bonded labor by children. While bonded labor is practiced, forced labor occurs in military portage and in situations in which a family or household is required to contribute

labor to a particular project, and the children are called upon by parents to help fulfill that obligation, without opposition by the authorities. Often, a family's sole breadwinner can ill afford to spend time working on forced labor projects because they lose valuable working time and wages. Subsequently, many children from rural villages substitute for their parents or siblings and work on forced labor projects. In many cases, as soon as a child is strong enough to carry a basket or split rocks, he or she must perform forced labor alongside the adults. Children are affected by forced labor both directly, when they have to work alongside their parents, and indirectly when the work takes their parents away from them for long periods, leaving them vulnerable to all kinds of abuse.

The SPDC army routinely uses civilians as unpaid porters to carry ammunition and food supplies to front line positions or while on patrol in ethnic minority areas. Many children are extrajudicially or accidentally killed while working as porters, and all are subject to cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. Boys as young as 14 years old have been taken to work as porters, particularly during major military offensives. Routinely, though, young boys are forced to carry supplies for one day at a time, while the army is on patrol. Many boys have died as a result of the treatment they received while working as porters.

As well as working as porters, civilians, including children, also have to guard militarily strategic roads and railways. Usually, women and girls are chosen for this work, and those with small children have no option but to take them along. For the children, this can be very abusive. 'Guard duty' lasts from 24 hours to 10 days, and the women sit under trees along the road or at the edge of railway embankments in an attempt to keep out of the hot sun or to shelter from the monsoon rains. The women have to take whatever food and cooking utensils they can carry. They are not given additional food by the army. In some cases their children fall ill, but there is no medical treatment for them and the women cannot leave their positions for fear of being shot. They are frequently checked by soldiers in vehicles throughout the day and night to ensure that they have not fallen asleep. Those who fall asleep or who leave their posts even briefly are beaten and verbally abused.

36. Child sex workers

There is relatively little information available on the sex industry within Burma. Child prostitution of young females due to the economic hardship is apparently increasing in the country. A representative of a Thai-based human rights NGO who recently visited Rangoon reported that it is easy to get girls as young as 13 years old as prostitutes: they are available from taxis outside the Hong Kong Club. In 1992 UNICEF found "significant evidence of child prostitution" in Rangoon, where prostitutes were interviewed who had begun work at the age of 12. The SPDC reported to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that prostitution is both legally and socially regulated in Burma, that those found to be earning a living from prostitution are prosecuted, and that the women are handed over or transferred to the responsibility of the Social Welfare Department.

However, the SPDC Child Law does not sufficiently protect children from sexual abuses and exploitation. While it is aimed at punishing the abusers, rather than the child, it does not prohibit child prostitution or using children in pornographic films. Violators of this law are given only a light sentence of two years imprisonment and/or a fine of 10,000

kyat (about US\$ 100); the law applies to those persons “neglecting knowing that a girl (leaving boys totally unprotected) under his guardianship, who has not attained the age of sixteen, is earning a living by prostitution,” or, “using the child in pornographic cinema, video, television or photography.”

The Child Law is also inadequate with regard to the trafficking of children into sexual or other slavery in foreign countries, mostly in Thailand. In fact, there is no mention of any penalty for trafficking children, despite the fact that there are at least 50,000 Burmese girls and women working in Thailand as sex workers at any one time. Given a fear of HIV infection, brothels have increased the turnover of girls, and increasingly younger girls are sought by clients, who believe they are less likely to be infected. The reality is that for younger girls, especially virgins, the risk of HIV infection during sexual activity is greater than for older women, and many girls become infected immediately.

When the trafficked girls and women from Burma arrive in Thailand, the abuses they suffer are extreme. They are forced to service as many as 50 clients a day. In most cases, the young girls are prevented from leaving the brothels. When they do manage to escape, the girls are often too ashamed to return home. By that time, many are found to be HIV positive. Those that are “rescued” in Thai police raids are detained by the Thai authorities on immigration charges and are held for months in detention centers where they face further abuse. From there they are deported to Burma, where again they face arrest under immigration laws for having left the country illegally. The SPDC has taken some steps to work in coordination with Thai authorities to prevent the trafficking of women and children, and has also signed, although not yet ratified, the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. But much more needs to be done by the Burmese authorities to ensure that future generations of young girls and boys are not sold into sexual slavery, beginning with the swift prosecution of traffickers, and an education program for the most vulnerable children and their parents.

37. Life as an illegal immigrant child from Burma

Political and economic hardships in Burma force many children, with or without their families, to seek refuge in Thailand or other neighboring countries. Fleeing forced labor and other abusive situations, many children end up in foreign countries where they are generally considered illegal immigrants and are subject to arrest, imprisonment, deportation, and sometimes forced repatriation; they are afforded almost no protection from international agencies.

Many unaccompanied children from Burma come to Bangkok and other cities in Thailand. Once there, they must beg or drift on the streets; they will consider any work that enables them to survive. Even the children who fled to the cities with their parents seeking odd jobs, must often find jobs themselves. Many of these “drifting” children end up in low-paid or unpaid construction jobs, or are sold into bonded labor in Thai brothels or factory sweatshops. Burmese children are working in the provinces all along the Thai-Burma border, in towns such as Tak and Ranong, at construction sites, gas stations, restaurants, and on fishing boats. Due to their illegal status and their lack of Thai language skills, most children are afraid to seek help. When these “illegal alien” children are arrested in Thailand, they are held at Immigration detention centers until their cases are processed.

Often this takes from six months to one year. At the centers, children are crammed together with other adult detainees in small, dark rooms where they wait to be sent back to Burma and an uncertain future.



Refugee children in the Mae La camp, Tha Song Yan district, Thailand in early 1999. Thousands of new refugees including these children streamed across the Thai border. (Photo by Aung Myo Min, HRDU)



Internally displaced child at Meh La Pho Hta, a site adjacent to the border with Thailand, in January 1999. (Photo by KHRG)



The children are playing at a shelter in the temporary site inside Burma near Tha Song Yan district, Thailand. They have no choice of a school education many have already died due to lack of food and medicine. (Photo by Aung Myo Min)

4. Forced Porter and Labor

4.1 Background

Since Burma became a member of the International Labor Organization in 1955, it accepted the ILO Convention on Forced Labor No.29 "Concerning Forced Labor," in which it agreed to "suppress the use of forced labor or compulsory labor in all its forms within the shortest possible period." The Convention defined forced labor as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself (or herself) voluntarily."

However, having ratified this Convention, the regime has failed to implement it, even though it was approved over 40 years ago. The widespread use of forced labor by Burma's military junta is well-known internationally. Since 1964, ILO Committee of Experts for the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has addressed the practice of forced labor in Burma. The ILO Assembly has adopted condemnatory resolutions using strongly critical language regarding Burma's breaches of ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 29.

On March 27, 1997, in accordance with the Article 26 of the ILO Constitution stating that if a country fails to meet the world's labor norms and standards, and violates human rights, then the ILO has the right to form a special commission of investigation, the ILO established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate a complaint brought by workers' delegates to the 1996 ILO Conference. The establishment of this Commission of Inquiry is the strongest legal action that the ILO can take against a member state and it found the government in breach of ILO Convention 29. The complaints addressed the active and continued use of forced labor by the regime in Burma and its apparent unwillingness to repeal legislation allowing the use of forced labor.

In the course of its inquiry, the Commission received over 6,000 pages of documents and heard testimony given by representatives of a number of non-governmental organizations and by some 250 eyewitnesses with recent experience of forced labor practices during the hearing in Geneva and in the course of the Commission's visit to the region. A comprehensive report on "Forced Labor in Myanmar (Burma)" by the Commission was released on July 2, 1998. Summaries of the testimony given by these witnesses, including women and children who had fled from forced labor, are appended to the Commission's report. The regime in Burma, abstained from attending the hearings and did not authorize a visit by the Commission of Inquiry to Burma arguing that "such a visit would not contribute much towards resolving the case" and "would interfere in the internal affairs of the country."

As was noted by the Commission of Inquiry, its report "reveals a saga of untold misery and suffering, oppression and exploitation of large sections of the population inhabiting Myanmar by the Government, military and other public officers. It is a story of gross denial of human rights to which the people of Myanmar have been subjected particularly since 1988 and from which they find no escape except fleeing from the country."

In its conclusion on the substance of the case, the Commission stated "there is

abundant evidence before the Commission showing the pervasive use of forced labor imposed on the civilian population throughout Myanmar by the authorities and the military for portering, the construction, maintenance and servicing of military camps, other work in support of the military, work on agriculture, logging and other production projects undertaken by the authorities or the military, sometimes for the profit of private individuals, the construction and maintenance of roads, railways and bridges, other infrastructure work and a range of other tasks.”

Laws which permitted the use of forced labor were promulgated by the colonial rulers. Following independence in 1948, successive Burmese governments have continued the practice of forced labor, citing as legal authority the “Village Act of 1908” and the “Towns Act of 1907.” The two laws require that laborers be (a) otherwise not employed, (b) physically fit, and (c) paid a reasonable fixed wage that is agreed upon beforehand. To date, neither of the two most prominent forced labor laws has been repealed. After repeated demands from the ILO that the government repeal the Village and Towns Acts which allows for the forced recruitment of labor, the regime stated in October 1997 that it had amended the two laws, but indicated that they would be included in the new constitution, rather than promulgated immediately.

Whenever the status or use of these laws, overwhelming evidence shows that the SPDC enforces a strict regime of forced labor throughout the country. However, the SPDC denies allegations of all forms of forced labor. It has responded a number of times that there is a tradition in Burma going back centuries, according to which people voluntarily contribute labor in the belief that it is a noble deed. On some occasions, the SPDC has described this as a Buddhist cultural tradition. The SPDC reported in 1993 that for the previous four years, local people had been voluntarily contributing their labor for the construction of roads and bridges, and that there is no coercion involved. These voluntary contributions, according to the SPDC, should not be considered as forced labor. The SPDC-controlled newspaper has reported that “the people of Myanmar are always aware of these development projects and welcome them wholeheartedly, and they are willing to take part in them whether they benefit from it directly or not.” Since mid-1996, the SPDC press organ, *The New Light of Myanmar*, has repeatedly carried articles on uncompensated labor, including statements by GOB officials admitting the regime’s reliance on “community service” for public infrastructure development, but claiming that this service has been voluntary.

In truth, tens of thousands of men, women, and children of all ages are forced each year to work without compensation at construction sites, army camps, or as porters for the army. The SPDC recruits forced labor by means of intimidation, coercion, and naked kidnapping. Laborers are taken away from their harvests and other forms of wage-earning only to spend weeks on uncompensated hard labor. They are not even provided with basic necessities like food or tools. If a person refuses to work on SPDC’s labor projects, he must pay exorbitant fines, pay a substitute workers, or worse he is beaten or killed. Indeed, beating, rape, and even murder are common even if a villager agrees to cooperate with the army’s round-ups.

In 1995 the SLORC issued two secret directives concerning the practice of forced labor on development projects. Directive No. 125 instructs all State/Division Law and Order Restoration Councils to stop using unpaid labor contributions in national development

projects. It requires that “in obtaining the necessary labor from the local people, they must be paid their due share.” Directive 125 also instructs the local authorities to “avoid undesirable incidents,” so as not to cause “misery and suffering to the people in rural areas ..” Directive No. 82 instructs the Rangoon Division Law and Order Chairman and the Ministry of Agriculture “to stop the practice of obtaining labor from the local people without monetary compensation” in the construction of dams in Rangoon division. The UN Special Rapporteur on Burma commented that as these directives were secret, they were not accessible either to the people to whom they applied, or to anyone trying to protect the rights of persons accused of breaking the laws.

The labor the SPDC calls voluntary is the most degrading, backbreaking, and inhumane kind that exists anywhere in the world. Villagers used as porters must carry packs for the army that amount to half the villagers’ weight. In conflict areas, they are sent ahead of troops to act as human mine sweepers or human bullet shields. Often the SPDC sends children ahead to sweep for mines to deter neighboring villagers from supporting oppositions the SPDC. This work is done without compensation. The porters are meagerly fed and sometimes not fed at all. If they get sick from disease, malnutrition, or exhaustion from their work they are offered no medical assistance and are often beaten and even killed.

Forced labor on roads, railways, and other infrastructural projects is becoming even more prevalent as the SPDC pushes forward with its “development” agenda. For these projects, the SPDC usually sends written orders to villages demanding a quota of one or more laborers per household for shifts of one or two weeks; usually a family’s turn will occur once per month on each project in their area (this is in addition to all other forced labor requirements such as porters and work at army camps). The villagers must perform forced labor and their parents must stay home to work the fields to provide some food for the family. Meanwhile, local battalions sap community finances and food where they are stationed.

No excuses are accepted for evading SPDC’s labor requirements. If adults in the household are sick or if the household consists only of a grandmother caring for her orphaned grandchild, the SPDC still requires that someone from the family go to the labor site; alternatively, the family must hire a substitute, the fee for which has increased dramatically over the past year. Sometimes, people can bribe a soldier by paying heavy fines or “porter taxes,” but usually the only option is to send a laborer or flee the area and risk being captured and beaten. On some projects, the army assigns each village or family a specific work task; in these situations, parents often take their children with them so they can finish their work assignment as quickly as possible and return home.

It is abundantly clear that these laborers are not working voluntarily; coercion and force are used to make people work on these labor activities. The “system” for recruiting labor is well-established. Typically, a local LORC commander contacts a village headman, or in urban areas, a council chairman, by written order. The order describes the number of laborers needed by a certain date for a particular infrastructure project. The consequences for not fulfilling such an order are not explicitly stated, rather they are intimidated through the enclosure of a bullet, chili, or a piece of charcoal that often accompanies an order. The enclosures are meant to be symbolic of the consequences that wait on those who will not follow SPDC’s orders; bullets mean that they will be shot and killed; a chili means they will be in “hot water” or that their animals will be cooked; and charcoal means that their

village will be burnt down. The village headman or council chairman then has to select families to work on a rotating basis. Sometimes, village headmen intercede or try to reduce the demands put on their communities, despite the implicit threats, but this can be fatal for them, especially in ethnic areas where on failure to cooperate with the army, the headmen would probably be accused of aiding ethnic armed groups.

In urban areas the SPDC has decreased its demands for forced labor, because it fears the possibility of uprisings in the cities and because forced labor in the cities is more visible to foreign visitors. Instead, the regime uses convicts for forced labor in the cities or brings in villagers from rural areas, while those who live in the cities simply pay cash in lieu of doing forced labor. In some forced labor projects on tourist routes the SPDC has even taken to paying forced laborers, though the amount paid is usually 20 or 40 *kyat* per day, which is no more than 25 per cent of the money needed for daily food. This allows them to show foreigners that forced laborers are “paid,” even though in the rest of the country forced laborers are never paid.

42 Portering

The use of civilian porters by the military is common in areas of armed conflict along the borders with Thailand, Bangladesh, and India, where SPDC troops have regularly staged offensives against ethnic armed groups. The regular major offensives which the SPDC troops conducts against the ethnic armed groups requires large quantities of supplies and equipment and could involve the use of thousands or even tens of thousands of civilian porters for period of several months. Offensives take place regularly in dry season, during which time civilians are taken from their villages and forced to endure dangerous and exhausting conditions. The use of porters has become less common in recent years since many ethnic groups reached cease-fire agreements with the SPDC, but their use continues in areas where fighting still continues. Both Karen National Union (KNU) and the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) have reported that the use of portering continues unabated as the SPDC steps up its military presence in the region. In both conflict and non-conflict areas the military demands porters on a regular basis for a wide range of duties, such as carrying equipment and supplies for routine patrols, carrying provisions to the local military camps, carrying out various duties at military centers or staying at the camp on “stand-by” in case they are needed.

The methods used to procure porters varied. Orders to provide porters emanate from the highest levels of the military command structure. The quota might be spread over a number of districts or townships. The order would be transmitted down the administrative command structure, so that a given village would be required to send a certain number of porters to a certain gathering point on a certain date. In cases where it is difficult to fill the quota in this way, the authorities resort to rounding up civilians in urban areas. The civilians are rounded up by the military at homes, at work places, stations, cinemas, and even at schools, to carry military materials and other supplies. In the absence of a sufficient number of able-bodied men, the military take women, children, the elderly, and persons otherwise unfit for work. In addition to rounding people up in an organized way, or ordering local authorities to provide them, the military also capture people at random from villages and rural areas which they pass through.

Conditions for porters are horrendous. Porters are generally required to march over rough, mountainous terrains carrying heavy loads, including foodstuffs, mortar shells, heavy artillery, and cooking and general camp equipment for the troops. Porters for the military camps are also ordered to build bunkers, clear the surrounding area of bush and mines, carry water and supplies to the camp, and work the recently confiscated fields for the army. Porters are given very little food, if any. Rations of food where supplied are meager; on average, each porter is given one to two cups of cooked rice and an equivalent quantity of water each day. Sometimes, porters are not provided any meals for many days at a time. Physical exhaustion, malnutrition, and beatings often cause porters to become very ill or seriously wounded; the SPDC does not provide them with medical care. Porters attempting to escape these atrocious conditions are killed or shot. Porters who are persistently slow, or who are unable to carry their loads because of exhaustion, sickness or injury are often severely beaten and forced to continue, or if this is not possible they are abandoned or killed. The killing of porters who could not continue appeared to be more common in potential conflict areas. In such areas, porters are not usually shot, but are beaten to death, have their throats cut, are thrown down the mountains sides, or into rivers with their hands tied behind their backs, or burned alive. In addition to those who were executed, many porters have died from disease, particularly malaria and general weakness.

Porters are not normally released until their replacements arrive. Sometimes it is difficult for replacements to be sent, either because the troops are a long distance from the home village, or because their whereabouts are unknown. In such cases porters might have to work for considerably longer periods.

Porters are also exposed to dangerous combat situations. These can include exposure to mines, booby-traps and ambushes. Soldiers sometimes force the porters to walk ahead of them in areas where mines or ambushes are suspected in order to minimize the exposure of troops to such dangers.

43. Forced labor for the military base

In areas where there is full SPDC control and no resistance, the villagers are placed completely at the disposal of the army. They must continually undertake rotating shifts of forced labor acting as servants at each of the military camps near their village. New military camps are always being established. Whenever a new battalion moves into an area, the nearby villages are forced to collect and provide most of the building materials for the camp, then at least one person per household is required to perform forced labor building the barracks and bunkers, digging trenches and erecting fences.

Villagers must also spend up to two weeks per month performing forced labor on infrastructure projects, such as roads, railways and hydroelectric dams, which the army implements to consolidate its control and attract foreign investment. Villagers must also pay the cost of these projects; the SPDC-controlled media often describes these “self-reliance basis” projects, meaning those which are constructed entirely with the forced labor and money from villagers; the money forced out of villagers for these infrastructure projects is listed as “people’s contributions” and usually amounts to one-third to half the total budget. However, in reality any money provided by Rangoon is simply pocketed by local and higher-level authorities, while villagers are forced to pay anywhere from 100 to 300 percent

of the actual cost of the project to these same authorities. In addition, many army camps confiscate their farmland without compensation and then force them to grow rations and cash crops for the army or for export. Peasants must also perform forced labor, gathering building materials for army camps and participating in money-making activities for the local army officers, such as logging and brick-baking. An average family must send one person for each of three or four types of forced labor every month; women must often do this labor because men are more likely to be beaten by soldiers at the work-site, and children must often go because their parents need to work in the fields for the survival of the family. If the village fails to comply with requests for forced laborers, materials or money, the village elders are arrested and often tortured, houses are burned down, or the army simply storms the village and takes two or three times as many people for labor as were originally requested.

In addition to constructing the military bases and working for the army-run self-reliance activities, the villages also have to provide a number of workers on a permanent basis to carry out a number of services at the camps, such as cleaning and maintenance, cooking, collecting water or firewood, washing clothes and acting as messengers. These messengers are the ones who would normally deliver written orders or summonses from the camp to village heads. These persons might sometimes be able to return home at night.

From Thayet Chaung township in Tenasserim Division alone, more than 600 people from a total of 47 village tracts are daily conscripted and used as laborers in the military camp in townships. A total of more than 3,000 people from the hundreds of villages in 10 townships are daily conscripted to serve as general factotums at the military camps in the region.

In areas where there is any possibility of conflict, villagers must undertake sentry duty at army camps; often most or all the soldiers sleep, leaving only unarmed villagers as sentries with orders to wake them up if anything happens. Villagers must also clear roadsides of scrubs and trees for anywhere from five to 100 meters on each side of military supply roads in order to decrease the chance of ambushes. In such areas, villagers must stand as sentries along roads and railways, with two to four villagers posted every 200 meters along the route. If anyone is seen on the road, they are supposed to send a signal up the line by beating on bamboo sticks. In the morning and near the conflict areas, village women and children are often forced to sweep roads with branches to detect landmines.

4.4. Forced labor at the army's "Income Generation Projects"

In some rural areas thousands of acres are confiscated and the villagers must perform forced labor on a variety of projects undertaken by the military. These projects include cultivation of rice and other food crops, cash crops such as rubber, shrimp farms, kilns for producing bricks, and logging activities. These projects are often promoted in the media as "local income-generation", but all proceeds go to the army. Officers also steal the wages and rations of rank-and-file soldiers and then order their soldiers to survive by looting the villages. All farmers who still have land must hand over 25-50 percent of their crops as a quota to the army and are paid only 10-20 percent of the market price. The quotas increase every year, even when there are bad crops and natural disasters, and farmers often have to sell their belongings to buy rice at the market price so that they will have enough to pay the

quota and avoid arrest. Many of the crops grown by forced labor and those handed over as quotas are used to support the army, but local officers take and sell a great deal of it, and it is likely that much of it is also sold to foreign companies for “counter-trade” export; “counter-trade” is a practice whereby foreign companies convert profits earned in *kyat*, the local currency which cannot be exported, into exportable goods by buying agricultural products from SPDC agencies.

In forested areas, villagers are also regularly ordered to cut and haul prime quality hardwood logs to local army camps or sawmills, where other villagers or sawmill owners are then forced to cut the logs into timber without compensation. The timber then disappears into market with all profit going to local military officers, while orders are issued forbidding the villagers to cut any trees for their own use. Also many military officers nationwide have also established brick-baking kilns at battalion camps. The villagers are forced to cut and deliver all the wood required to bake the bricks, while the rank-and-file soldiers are forced to bake bricks for eight to ten hours a day in addition to their normal military duties. The officers then sell the bricks on the market for their own benefit and pay no compensation to anyone.

45. Infrastructure development and maintenance

Civilians are used in the infrastructure and “development” projects such as construction and maintenance of roads, railways, bridges, airports, hydroelectric schemes and tourist-oriented projects. Although in 1996 the SPDC announced that civilians would not be used any more in the railway construction and irrigation projects, there are credible reports that the use of forced labor remained widespread throughout the country. The regime has claimed that the infrastructure projects in the remote regions are part of its Border Areas Development Program and that it will improve access to markets, schools, and health care. However, there has been little indication that road construction has facilitated social development, and the existing schools and hospitals in the region remain woefully understaffed and under-equipped. The regime frequently claims these projects are being undertaken for the villagers’ benefit, admonishing villagers to uphold their responsibilities to their district and the nation by participating in them. In fact, as these infrastructure projects are implemented almost entirely with forced labor, rather than improving their living conditions, they cause greater hardship for local people.

People might have to travel considerable distances to work sites, particularly for more extensive projects requiring large numbers of laborers. It is very common for civilians to have to walk for several hours to reach a work site. When a village, household or peasant is required to complete a given amount of work, people are not able to leave until that work is completed. Often, a time period is specified within which the work has to be completed. If the work is not completed to the satisfaction of the soldiers supervising the work, that village, household or peasant would not be allowed to return home, and those involved might be beaten or otherwise punished. People usually have to bring their own food and necessary tools. If they become sick, they are not treated, and usually have to pay a fine or arrange a replacement to enable them to return to their village to seek medical attention.

4.6. Yadana Natural Gas Pipeline Project

Forced labor has allegedly been used in association with the construction of the Yadana natural gas pipeline project in Tenasserim Division. It is the most controversial infrastructure development project in Burma because of repeated allegations that the SPDC has used forced labor, and that troops providing security have used forced porters on a project which includes several international oil companies as investors. Additional allegations include the forced relocation of villages near the pipeline and claims that the Ye-Tavoy railway, on which the SPDC is widely acknowledged to have used forced labor, bears some relation to the Yadana project. The United States Embassy has reported that the Ye-Tavoy railway is being constructed in order to facilitate Burmese army operations in the pipeline area because the existing highway's usefulness was limited during the wet season. It also reports that "during the past two years, diverse press and Internet reports, often based on refugee sources in Thailand, repeatedly alleged that this extension of the SPDC railroad is being built with an amount and harshness of forced labor that is unusual even by contemporary Burmese standards." Construction purportedly took place 24 hours a day during the dry season. The oil companies vigorously deny that forced labor has occurred on the Yadana project and maintain that there is no connection between the pipeline and the Ye-Tavoy railway. The SPDC, which has acknowledged using uncompensated labor to construct at least one other gas pipeline project, calls allegations of forced labor on the Yadana project "totally unfounded."

In 1982, large natural gas deposits that were to become known as the Yadana field were discovered in the Andaman Sea, approximately 30 km south of Burma's Irrawaddy Delta region. Thailand's demand for energy and a desperate revenue shortage in Burma led the SPDC to consider developing this resource in the late 1980s. The SPDC solicited commercial support for a proposal to construct a pipeline that would deliver natural gas from the offshore Yadana field to Thailand, across southern Burma's Tenasserim Division. In late 1991, the SPDC reached a preliminary agreement with the Petroleum Authority of Thailand to deliver gas from the Yadana field to Thailand. Insurgencies along much of the southern part of the Burmese-Thai border posed serious security risks to the proposed route. At the time, the World Bank advised that the pipeline be rerouted "away from the Burmese-Thai border where conflicts between Rangoon and the minority Karen group still continue."

Although several alternative routes were considered, Burmese and Thai authorities agreed by mid-1992 that the pipeline should follow a route similar to the one originally proposed. The route ultimately chosen crosses the Thai-Burmese border at Nai Ei Taung where less than 25 km separate the Thai border from the Andaman Sea. Ethnic insurgents have held much of the inland hills along that border since Burma's independence in 1948. Because Nai Ei Taung and the Zinba River valley below it are inhabited by ethnic Karen and have been held by the Karen National Union (KNU) since the 1960s, the chosen pipeline route required the GOB to assert effective military control over the region before construction across the inhospitable terrain could begin. Improved logistical and transportation infrastructures were needed to establish such control in the region, as the only means of transportation along the coastal plain other than dirt bullock-cart tracks was one occasionally paved road running north-south. In July 1992, the French oil company Total signed a

production-sharing contract with Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), Burma's state-owned oil production company, for evaluating, developing and producing gas from the offshore Yadana field. The American company Unocal joined the project as a co-venture in January 1993, and the national oil company of Thailand, the Petroleum Authority of Thailand Exploration and Production Public Company, Ltd. (PTTEP) joined the project early in 1995. The pipeline is to be 36 inches in diameter throughout its 416 mile length, which includes 215 miles underwater in the Andaman Sea, 39 miles overland in Burma, and 161 miles in Thailand. The project is scheduled to begin delivering gas in 1998 and is expected to raise approximately \$164 million per year from gas sales alone. Estimates of the SPDC's total revenues including dividends and taxes on the project range as high as \$400 million per year.

Allegations of human rights abuses, particularly of forced labor in the construction of the pipeline and associated infrastructures, have been vigorously denied by the oil companies. They have stated that now workers on the project were hired by the army and that all were voluntary employees who were paid well for their work. The oil companies have also emphasized their role in the development of local communities along the pipeline route. Although expatriate staff were recruited to build the actual pipeline itself, evidence suggests that Burmese nationals built the majority of support facilities for the pipeline including:

- The pipeline center (PLC), or base camp, with about 60 buildings to house expatriates and Burmese nationals, completed in October 1995. The PLC is surrounded by layers of chain-link barbed fences separated by "a clear field of fire" with two underground bunkers in the center of the camp;
- A dirt landing strip near the PLC, completed in January 1996;
- A temporary logistical base or "flying camp" to support construction that was accessible only by air, located near the mid-point of the pipeline;
- A jetty on the western bank of the Heinze River estuary, just north of the PLC;
- At least a dozen helipads, including two at the base camp.

According to Unocal, "The Total affiliate, as project operator, is responsible for all day-to-day operations relating to the pipeline, including hiring all labor . . . The Government of Myanmar does not provide or arrange for personnel to work on the pipeline." However, during a January 1996 visit to the pipeline, a US Embassy officer reported that "Total officials stressed that Total pays these local workers directly, even though they are hired by the army." The Embassy added that Total's own briefing materials indicate that, between February 1995 and mid-January 1996, 463 villagers were "hired" by Burmese Infantry Battalions (IB) 273, 401, 403, 407, and 409 and quartered in those battalions. The same Total briefing materials indicate that Total supplied weekly a food ration to the villagers "in the battalions." Refugees interviewed by the Karen Human Rights Group claim that they were forced to build project facilities including a helipad near Migyaunglaung used by civilian helicopters transporting Westerners and construction supplies and barracks for IB 408 between Kanbauk and Ohnbinkwin. These refugees were also allegedly forced to collect porter fees for "pipeline *loke-are-pay*" (forced labor) by IB 404 at Hpaung Daw. Human Rights Watch and other groups have reported similar interviews with individuals claiming they were forced to clear sections of the pipeline corridor or to build other facilities to support the pipeline. The work was being performed in an area that poses a significant risk to the workers.

In January 1996, a Singapore-based Unocal official responsible for monitoring the treatment of workers on the pipeline said that laborers were paid directly by Total and “that the rate at which these workers run away has decreased sharply since the start of the project.” By definition, workers can cease voluntary labor when they desire to change jobs or cease working altogether. The statement that workers on the project had “run away” may constitute an acknowledgment that at least some persons were coerced into working there.

Human rights groups and ethnic opposition groups have reported a significant increase in the number of Burmese army battalions stationed in the pipeline area since 1993, suggesting that the purpose of this build-up was to provide security for the pipeline. While the pipeline was under construction, a military facility was built on Heinze Island which is allegedly used to provide off-shore security for the pipeline. The UN Special Rapporteur on Burma reports that the military ordered 200 civilians to go to Heinze Island for two weeks in May 1995 in order to clear ground, build a helicopter pad and construct several buildings. The civilians did not receive any compensation for their work and had to pay the fuel bill for the boat that took them to the island. Troops in the area have also been accused of forcing civilians to build army bases and of pressing local villagers to serve as porters and provide other support for their security operations.

As of 1996, five battalions (IBs 273, 403, 404, 408 and 409) were assigned to the area. The map indicates that the location of these units directly on the pipeline corridor remains basically unchanged; however, the number of battalions stationed directly along the route has increased to six, with two other battalions operating just above and below the corridor. The 1998 map indicates that the battalions currently providing security for the pipeline are IBs 273, 282, 401, 406, 407, 408, 409 and 410. The presence of these battalions is consistent with reports by NGOs and opposition groups in the area.

Refugees who recently fled to Thailand identified many of the same battalions identified by Total as having “hired” civilians to work on infrastructure development projects and serve as military porters in the area of the pipeline. Transcripts of interviews published by the Karen Human Rights Group include similar allegations of forced labor and forced portering.

Burmese army units have also allegedly relocated villages in the area of the pipeline. Officials from the oil companies, while not denying charges that the SPDC forcibly relocated villagers, have told that “such relocations were without the direction and knowledge of the oil companies.” A Unocal brochure claims that “since the production-sharing contract was signed in 1992, no villages in the vicinity of the pipeline have been relocated.”

Credible evidence exists that several villages along the route were forcibly relocated or depopulated in the months before the production-sharing agreement was signed. Villagers said that it occurred in 1991. Several villages close to the pipeline were ordered to relocate and their residents either fled to refugee camps or complied with the relocation order. Residents of one village told that their village was ostensibly relocated for security reasons, but that, with the assistance of Total, they were able to petition the government to allow them to return.

The Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand paid for an advertisement in the *Bangkok Post* in 1995 that stated, “Myanmar has recently cleared the way by relocating 11 Karen villages that would otherwise obstruct the passage of the gas resource development project.”

The completed Ye-Tavoy railway runs from north to south for 110 km between the coastal towns of Ye and Tavoy and will cross the pipeline, which runs from east to west, near Kanbauk. The use of forced labor on the construction of the Ye-Tavoy railway was widespread and it was said to be being built “with an amount and harshness of forced labor that is unusual even by contemporary Burmese standards.” Although there is no evidence that suggests the railway was designed to support actual construction of the pipeline, military operations, including pipeline security, could be facilitated by the railway. There is evidence that the original route of the railway reflected military, rather than economic or engineering concerns. Embassy reports described road access to the pipeline area during the wet season as “limited” and noted that “pipeline security could be materially facilitated by the railway now under construction between Ye and Tavoy.” The urgency of building the railway, which at one point involved 24 hour construction by forced laborers, and the fact that the railway was scheduled to become operable at approximately the same time as the pipeline, suggest that the military placed a high priority on access to the pipeline provided by the railway.

The only merit to the original route of the railway was that it gave the military full access to areas where armed opposition groups traditionally operated the rainforest hills along the Burmese-Thai border. The original route bypassed local population centers and was abandoned after being washed out twice by rainwater flowing down the sides of the hills during the annual monsoons.

47. Prison Labor

The number of prisoners in Burma increased considerably after the military’s coup de’tat in 1988. Since then, prisoners, including political prisoners and student activists, have been used not only in labor camps but also as laborers at military bases. Prisoners are also regularly sent from prisons and labor camps across the country to be used by the army in major offensives. They continue to wear prison uniforms and are usually kept separate from the other porters.

Prisoners serving relatively short sentences are preferred to prisoners serving longer sentences because it is thought they will be less likely to attempt escape. Thus, those doing forced labor are often those who are in jail for “non-crimes” such as curfew violations, selling goods without a SPDC license, or cursing SPDC soldiers. However, political prisoners are sometimes sent to the hard labor camps where the access to their friends or families is more difficult.

In many cases when used as operations porters, convicts are held and continued to be used as porters well after the expiration of their prison sentences. Convicts doing forced labor are generally treated much more brutally than ordinary civilians and are routinely used in very dangerous work, such as blowing up rock faces or digging at cliff-sides, in which many of them are killed. They are beaten and otherwise abused on the slightest provocation, given far from adequate food, and medical treatment is virtually nonexistent for them should they fall ill.

As a result of the increase in the prison population since the military regime took power, and in order to cope with the shortage of prison facilities, the SPDC has established at least six new Win Saung battalions (porter battalions). These Win Saung battalions are

mainly used to create a ready supply of porters to the frontiers; prisoners are kept ready for porter duties while working at the army battalions. According to eyewitnesses, the treatment of prisoners at prison battalions is barbaric, as one might expect. Only those prisoners who can afford to pay bribes (from 50,000 - 70,000 *kyat*) can avoid being recruited into these porter battalions.

4.8. Partial List of 1998 Forced Labor Projects

Shan State

Inle Lake Beautification Project, Shan State
 Kun Hein-Parkaw motor road, Kun Hein township, Shan State
 Ta Sarng - Murng Pan motor road, Shan State
 Ta Sarng - Murng Ton motor road, Shan State
 Nam Serng - Punlon motor road, Shan State
 Murng Sert - Murng Ton motor road, Shan State
 Tacheleik -Kengtong motor road, Shan State
 Nam Zang military air base, Nam Zang township, Shan State
 Shwe Nyaung - Nam Zang motor road, Shan State
 Nam Zang - Murng Nai motor road, Shan State
 Shwe Nyaung - Taunggyi motor road, Shan State
 Mae Pan stream hydropower station construction, Murng Sert township, Shan State

Karen State

Kyeikdon - Kya-ein-seik-kyi motor road, Karen State
 Kyeikdon - Kyodoe- kawkereik motor road, Karen State
 Wah Lay- Kyo Glee- Po Yay motor road, Karen State
 Kyo Glee - Tee Kee Plar motor road, Karen State
 Kyeikdon - Saw Hta motor road, Karen State
 Bridge construction over Gyaing River, Karen State
 Saw Hta - Lay Po Hta motor road, Karen State

Mon State

10,000 Acres Farmland Project, Thaton-Belin motor road, Mon State
 Ye - Kyaung Ywa - Leik Poke motor road renovation, Mon State
 Thein Zayet - Mee Laung Zayat motor road, Mon State

Karenni State

Demawsoe - Daw Tamagyi motor road renovation, Karenni State
 Mawchee - Taungoo motor road, Karenni State
 Loikaw - Ye Yaw motor road, Karenni State
 Pun River - Shadaw motor road renovation, Karenni State
 Loikaw - Taunggyi motor road extension, Karenni State
 Daw Law Khaw - Bwe Lai motor road construction, Karenni State

Ngwe Taung Summer paddy Cultivation, Ngwe Taung , Karenni State

Tenasserim Division

Ye-Tavoy motor road, Tenasserim Division

Bonti-Tavoy Highway motor road, Tenasserim Division

Ale Sakhan - MNSP Tavoy District Headquarters, Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division

Le Taung Ya - Yoka Moo Ku motor road, Tavoy, Tenasserim Division

500 acres cashew nuts field, Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division

Moe Htaung - Bokeyyin motor road, Tenasserim Division

Kawthaung - Mergui motor road, Tenasserim Division

Myinntha - Bongti motor road, Tenasserim Division

Sagaing Division

Hanthawaddy Land Project, Kalaymyo township, Sagaing Division

Tha Nan - Ton He motor road, Kabaw valley, Sagaing Division

Airbase, Klemyo, Sagaing Division

Laeshe - Htanmathi motor road, Sagaing Division

Yinmabin Land Development Project, Yinmabin township, Sagaing Division

Rangoon Division

Kongyangone salt fields, Rangoon Division

Htantapin land development Project, Rangoon Division

Ah-lae village - Aye Ywa village, Htantabin township, Rangoon Division

Pegu Division

Pa Thee Dam construction Project, Pegu Division

4.9. Incidents of Forced Labor by Region

4.9.1. Tenasserim Division

Bonti - Myinntha motor road

Using over 400 inmates from Mergui and Insein Prisons, many of them political prisoners, the SPDC authorities have begun additional forced labor projects in Tenasserim Division. The latest such projects are the construction of battalion facilities in Tenasserim township and the Myinntha - Bongti road. Over 100 inmates of Mergui Prison are currently being held in a forced labor camp at Thon Ma Kar village, where they are constructing offices for the military. The prisoners began work on November 23, 1998. On the same day SPDC authorities used six heavy trucks to move 300 inmates of Insein Prison to Tavoy. They arrived in Myinntha village on November 26 to begin work on the planned road between the Thai border town of Bongti and the coastal seaboard at Myinntha. The SPDC authorities are hopeful that increased cross-border trade using the planned road will generate much-needed hard currency for the regime.

The new projects have been named “New Life” projects No. 4 and 6. It remains to be seen how many lives will be lost in the completion of such “new lives.” (*Source: Yoma 3*)

Construction of Dykes in Thayet Chaung township

The SPDC LIB 403, 404 and 405 conscripted and forced more than 200 people living in Laba, Hsitaw and Pinyinbyugyi villages, Thayet Chaung township, to construct a long range of dykes continuously for four months. This construction began in February 1998 in order to make 4,000 acres of formerly flooded land cultivable. The three battalions claimed that the newly cultivatable land belongs to the military.

More than 2,000 laborers, including a large proportion of women and children, were forced to work without pay. They also had to bring their own food and tools. Many of them became sick during the four months’ period of the forced labor due to the appalling working conditions, but were not given any compensation. Because of the large number of those conscripted, many of the local inhabitants were deprived of access to their own means of subsistence. (*Source: MIS*)

Rice Cultivation project on Pyingyi Island, Launglon township

In 1997, the SPDC confiscated more than 1,000 acres of rice fields on Pyingyi Island in Launglong township and another more than 700 acres from Yebae and Ka Nyon Kyun village tracts from the same township, Tenasserim Division. No compensation was paid to 300 farmers. These rice fields were confiscated for an experimental modern rice cultivation project of the SPDC.

In 1998, the SPDC military battalion conscripted more than 500 local people from the island to work as unpaid laborers on this experimental project. Only a few tractors were provided by the authorities and most of the work was done with manual labor. The SPDC troops led by Captain San Lin from the LIB 104 supervised the implementation of the project in collaboration with some SPDC agricultural officials. (*Source: MIS*)

4.9.2. Mon State

Ye Tavoy railway project

The Ye-Tavoy Railway which was notorious for massive use of forced labor during its construction, was inaugurated on March 26, 1998. It took four years of construction using forced labor of the local civilians, including women, old people and children. International human rights organizations have condemned this construction with its massive use of forced labor. Many died of exhaustion, mistreatment and natural disasters during their forced labor service. Though it was inaugurated in March, it did not remain long in service. The railroad was forced to close down 52 days after its official inauguration due to damage caused by heavy rain in the region. The foundation for the railway were eroded in the floods between Gangaw Daung and Pauk Pin Gwin in Kanbaw.

From May 27, 1998, about 3,000 civilians have been forced to work once again in

the reconstruction of the railway. People from Yebyu, Launglon, Tovoy and Thayet Chaung townships in Tenasserim Division have been ordered to repair the railway depending on their own food and tools. Each is ordered to dig a pit of earth 10 feet wide and one foot high within a day. They have to carry the earth to replace the bedding for the railway. Some are ordered to cut the 50 pieces of wood 4.5 feet long in a day. There are some soldiers from battalions under the Division 8, but they do not actually work on the construction. Instead they are for media propaganda and they receive 20 *kyat* a day for their fake service in the reconstruction work. (*Source: HRDU*)

4.9.3. Shan State

Forced labor in agricultural projects in Namtu township

From January to August 1998, the SPDC troops and various government departments forced the people in Murng Yaen tract, Namtu township, Shan State, to cultivate maize on 600 acres of land for them at a place near Nam Tawng Kong village. The villagers had to clear the jungle, dig out roots, till the land, grow the maize and weed the farm regularly until the harvest which they had to reap and give to the SPDC authorities.

During the period between the clearing of the land up to harvest time, the amount of forced labor equivalent to 20,000 people from Wan Zarm village tract, 6,032 people from Nar Ngu village tract and 750 people from Nam Tawng Kong village tract was used. It is estimated that during the harvest, the amount of forced labor equivalent to not less than 10,000 people. After growing the maize, the villagers were still obliged to grow sesame and soya bean for the authorities. (*Source: SHRF*)

4.9.4. Karen State

Taungoo - Baw Gali Gyi motor road

People from all villages around Baw Gali Gyi village in Taungoo district, Pegu Division, were ordered in March and May 1998 to clear the trees and bushes along the sides of the Taungoo- Baw Gali Gyi motor road. Forty to 50 people had to go each day; all men, women and children who were able to work had to go.

This road was entirely built with the forced labor of villagers in the area and was only finished in 1997. Not only did it cause a great deal of suffering in terms of forced labor, but it allowed the increased militarization of the area and has caused the displacement of many people from their villages as a result. The road passes through very difficult terrain but was mostly built by hand; like all other roads in this area, it was incompetently engineered by military officers, made only with dirt and with no proper drainage. It is largely destroyed every rainy season and must be rebuilt with the forced labor of villagers, every November-December.

Taungoo - Mawchee motor road

At the beginning of 1998, the SPDC ordered construction to begin on a new road

from Taungoo to Mawchee, the main town of southern Karenni State. This follows the route of an old pre-World War II road which is no longer usable. The straight-line distance is about 80 km, but when completed the total length of the new road will probably be 150 km because of the difficult terrain it has to pass through.

The new road is to use the existing road from Taungoo as far as Baw Gali Gyi, but in early 1998, villages began receiving written orders demanding people for forced labor on a permanently rotating basis to clear a new route east of Baw Gali Gyi. Orders were issued under the demand by the IB 48 based in Baw Gali Gyi. Every three days, 40 people from Baw Gali Gyi, Baw Gali Lay, Thit Say Taung, Kyuak Pon and Pyaung Tho villages in Baw Gali Gyi village tract were ordered to work for the road construction with their own food and tools. Laborers including women, had to work under the strict supervision of the military soldiers.

Work was suspended during the rainy season from June to October 1998, but has not resumed. SPDC troops at the other end of the route in Mawchee have also been forcing villagers there to do road construction labor as well. (*Source: KHRG*)

4.10. List of individual incidents in 1998

◆ From January to August 1998, SPDC troops and various departments had forced the people in Murng Yaen tract, Namtu township, Shan State, to cultivate maize on 600 acres of land for them at a place near Nam Tawng Kong village. The villagers had to clear the jungle, dig out the roots, till the land, grow the maize and weed the farm regularly until the harvest which they had to reap and give to the SPDC authorities. During the period between the clearing of land up to harvest time, the number of forced laborers used totaled 20,000 people from Wan Zarm village group, 6032 people from Nar Ngu village group, 750 people from Nam Tawng Kong village. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ In January 1998, villagers from Ye Bon, New Lain, and Kyauk Shut villages in Tenasserim Division were ordered to work on hill cultivation owned by the LIB 408. Each household in the villages required to send one person every week to work without pay. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ In January 1998, Kard Phui, Wan Kyawng, Wan Nar, Wan Leng, Pang Leng and Wan Pang villages-all in Murng Kerng township, Shan State-were ordered to move to Murng Kerng town within three days. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On January 6, 1998, LIB 710 commander Major Thein Htun and IB 39 commander Major Myo Lwin seized Kler-lar villagers in Taungoo district, Pegu Division, for portorage. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ In mid February, 1998, two conveyes totaling 50-70 military trucks loaded with prisoners from prisons in other parts of Burma were brought to Kyeikdon and Saw Hta in Karen State to begin forced labor on the construction of several roads in Kyeikdon townships. The prisoners totaled between 1,500 to 3,000. (*Source: KHRG*)

◆ In February 1998, local villagers from Ale Sakhan, Kyauk Kadin, Kywe Talin and Raphu villages in Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division, were ordered to work the road between Ale Sakhan and NMSP's Tavoy District headquarters. They were ordered to work there with their own food and tools once in 10 days. The NMSP is building this new road for its supply route. (*Source: ABSDF*)

- ◆ On February 2, 1998, troops from SPDC IB 73, camping at Nuaunglebin Gwin, Htantabin township, Pegu Division, forced the villagers from that village to cut wood and bamboo. Then the troops sold the wood and used the proceeds as their ration money. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On February 27, 1998, Captain Tin Maung Shwe from LIB 118 of SPDC Division 44, ordered Kru See and No Aw Aan villages in Thaton district, Mon State, to cut timbers for building camps and said the villages failing to do so would have to pay 15,000 *kyat*. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On March 10, 1998, Tactical Command (2) led by Lt-Col. Thein Maung together with LB 73 battalion commander Thein Lwin forcibly collected porters from nearby villages and used them as mine sweepers along the road from Kalay Soe Khee to Tae Tho village. Among these porters were two 12-year-old girls and two 11-year-old boys. (**Source: KIC**)
- ◆ On April 17, 1998, SPDC commander Swe Myint ordered the town community leaders and other village tract headmen in Murng Ton in Shan State to provide laborers for splitting rocks at a place called Loi Put, located 35 miles from the town. Over 300 civilians were collected and transported to the work site and forced to work from April 17-30, 1998. No pay or no food was provided. (**Source: SHRF**)
- ◆ Starting on April 22, 1998, soldiers started to build three camps on the hills just south of Daw Tah Hay and P'yah Pyu villages in Tee Thay Ka village tract, Loikaw township. To build the camps, one person from each house in the 25 villages of Tee Thay Ka village tract and Tee Lon village tract had to work in rotation, bringing their own rice and without getting any payment. The officer in charge of constructing the camps was Captain San Hlaing. (**Source: KNWO**)
- ◆ Since May 1998, villagers from Awin Shwe, Shwe Yaung Pya, Zee Win, Kalaung Ain, Mayangone and Mi Chaung Ai villages along the Thaton-Belin motor road in Mon State have been ordered to work at the sugar-cane plantation owned by Division 44. This plantation is 3,222 acres wide and run by the LIB 3, LIB 7, LIB 9 and LIB 24 under the Division. Each village is ordered to send 10 villagers daily to work at the sugar-cane project. Not only are the villagers required to bring their own food and tools, but they are also ordered to provide 12 viss of pork in every fifteen days to the troops led by Captain Naing Lin from LIB 8. (**Source: HRDU**)
- ◆ Since May, 1998, SPDC troops in Murng Pan, Larng Khur, Murng Nai and Nam Zarng townships in Shan State have been forcing civilians in the areas to split stones near Ta Sarng, near the Salween River. Ten persons from each township have to work for 15 days after which they are replaced by another batch of forced laborers. (**Source: SHRF**)
- ◆ In May 1998, Lashio-based IB 41 forced civilians to cultivate rice for the military in the area of Parng Larn village tract in Murng Yai township, Shan State. Villagers from the village tracts of Wan Zarng, Ho Ter, Parng Larn, Nam Sawm, Luk Khai and Quarter 1,2,3 of Murng Yai town had to provide laborers for cultivation over the entire period. (**Source: SHRF**)
- ◆ On May 24, 1998, commander Myint Hlaing of No. 2 Tactical Command and battalion commander Myint Han of the IB 48 forced villagers of all ages and both sexes from Baw Gali and Kaw Thay Doe villages in Htantabin township, Pegu Division to clear bushes on both sides of Baw Gali-Mawchee motor road. Most of the villagers are Christians, but they were forced, even on Sundays, to work without time for rest or worship. (**Source:**

KIC)

◆ On June 4, 1998, the Golden Triangle Military Command Region Commander Maj-Gen. Thein Sein ordered major Hla Htwe to confiscate 13 plots of land and rice fields owned by villagers of Kingka In Kaeng Tung township, Shan State. This was for the purpose of expanding military base there. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On June 15, 1998, troops from IB 30 and IB 59 under the No.3 Tactical Command forcibly gathered more than 30 women from Kaw Thay Doe and Baw Gali villages in Htantabin township, Pegu Division, and used them as porters to carry supplies to Busu Khee army camp. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On June 24, 1998, troops from IB 2, IB 8 and LIB 1,3,9,102,108 demanded one person from every household from Hteepaw, Ma Ei Has, Mi Chaung Ain, Mayagone, Klaw Theh, Shwe Pyaung Pya, Lah Aung Leh, Strong, and Tawya villages in Thaton township, Mon State, to clear the land for an army plantation project. Anyone who failed to appear was fined 5,000 *kyat*. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On June 28, 1998, troops from column 2, of LIB 440 led by commander Kyaw Min demanded 250 villagers from nearby and forcibly had them clear bushes around the villages of Koka, Tala Seik, Kyee Binsuu and Lein Bin Wai, Nyaunglebin district, Pegu Division. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ In July 1998, 10,000 acres of farmland from the 20 villages along the Thaton-Belin motor road were confiscated by the Division 44 based in Thaton, Mon State. These farmlands were taken by the military for their "10,000 Farmlands Project" in the Division.

◆ The villages are Mayagone, Mi Chaung Ai, Kalaung Inn, Shwe Yaung Pya, Ah Win Gyi, Zee Win, Cahung Zauk, Ye Wei, Kama Sai, Donwon, Taphet Swe, Shwe Hlwe, Taung Lay, Shwe Ein Ton, Dauk Yak, Khe Mauk, Tattu Gone, Kyat Khee Khat, Thit Cha Taung and Ka Dee villages. These villages also had to provide one villager from each household for forced labor on the farms. They were ordered to clear the ground, cut the trees and build the farm huts for the military. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On July 11, 1998, Major Aung Soe of LIB 102 ordered the civilian population to provide laborers for weeding the soya bean and corn farms owned by the military in Murg Pan township, Shan State. Ten persons each from 15 villages each day had to bring their own food and tools to do the work. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On July 21, 1998, troops from IB 59, led by second commander, Thura Sein Win, rounded up 32 villagers for forced labor. Four were from Takot Soekee, two from Mae Kolaw, two from Mae Kleehta, two from Mae Waing, four from Toe Makhee, three from Lar Wahko, four from Klook, two from Pway Day and the rest from other villagers. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ Since August, one person per household has been ordered to work on canal construction in Myaung township, Sagaing Division. The villages affected for the forced labor are Magyiboke, Twinggyi, Shwepan, Kyao, Pa Reinma, Shwe Pan Gyun, Thiri Zaya, Oke Hne Boke, Myasan, King, Boo Gaing, Kopin, Kyaung Yit, Naset, Tama Saygan and Zayat Gone, all in Myaung township. The authorities also collected a total of approximately five million *kyat* at a rate of 50 *kyat* per acre from the people. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ In August 1998, each household from 21 village tracks in Inle Lake was ordered by the SPDC to grow 40-150 plants on the bank of Inle Lake during the rainy season. It was part of a project called the "Inle Lake Beautification Project," to grow 800,000,000 plants

in order to attract more tourists to the Inle Lake in Shan State. Due to the drought in 1998, the level of water in Inle Lake was lower than usual so the SPDC troops in the region forced the local villagers to grow plants to beautify the lake's surroundings. A pit 2ft wide and 1ft deep was required for each plant and the villagers had to dig them. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ In early August 1988, 30 villagers from Legyi village, 20 villagers from Yengangyi village, and 10 villagers from Sin Zwe village, Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division, were ordered to work on dyke construction on the farms owned by IB 409. These three villages had to supply 60 villagers every week, and pay 350 *kyat* for each person who failed to come to work. (**Source: Yoma 3**)

◆ In August and September 1998, every household in Paya Kyo, Kyarkan, Nyaung Larn, Ohnbin, Sin Min Aing, Kantha, Sakangyi, Palu, Aung Chan Tha, Bolay and Ye Kyaw was ordered to supply forced labor at the embankment on the eastern margin of Khayan township, Rangoon Division. Those who failed to appear were ordered to pay a fine of 3000 *kyat*. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ On August 6, 1998, the commander of the Tactical Command No. 3 in the Southern Command forcibly gathered 10 women from Kaw Thay Doe, Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and ordered them to work as porters for the army for two days. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On August 27, 1998, 10 villagers from Naung Bo village, Hlaingbwe township, Karen State, were taken as porters by the troops from IB 81 led by Major Yu Lwin. They were forced to carry heavy loads with the columns fighting in the KNU 7th Brigade area. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ Since September, 1998, LIB 506 at Nam Lan in Hsipaw township, Shan State, have been forcing the civilians in the area to cultivate crops for them. All the villagers in Wan Zing tract have to provide 70 laborers per day to work on the 60 acres of land which were once peanut and sesame farms and had been confiscated from the villagers. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ In September 1998, troops from LIB 234 came into the Bpeh Gkaw Der village, Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and ordered the village headman to provide 10 porters. (**Source: KHRG**)

◆ On September 17, 1998, troops from IB 48 went into Kaw Thay Doe village in Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and forcibly conscripted 50 villagers as porters to carry food to Naw Soe military camp. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On September 21, 1998, Major Htun Htun Aye, Major Thin Kyaw, Captain Maung Maung Lay and Captain Myo Lay ordered villagers in Tavoy district to work on the construction of Le Taung Ya - Yoka Moo Ku motor road. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On September 29, 1998, 30 males were rounded at the video halls in Kyaukkyi by the soldiers from LIB 351 led by battalion commander Lt-Col. Khun Naung. Only those who were able to give 10,000 *kyat* were released later and the rest were taken as porters for mobile columns moving into Papun district. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ In October 1998, several acres of cultivated land of the villagers at Nam Pawng village in Lashio township, Shan State, were confiscated by SPDC troops for building new military bases. Crops such as rice, sesame, peanut and soya beans on the land were destroyed and the land turned into a new military base for LIB 522, 243 and IB 41 using forced labor. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ In October 1998, 500 people from Htantabin township, Rangoon Division, were

daily forced to clear virgin land for the military in the area. This was monitored by Major Lwin Soe from the military unit based in Anyasuu on the Rangoon-Nyaungdon road. People were forced to work continuously in rain and sun without any rest. U Myo Myint from Nyaungyoe village of Htantabin township was bitten by a poisonous snake on October 29, 1998. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)

◆ In the first week of October, villagers from Le Kaung Ywa and Thaput Lein village tracts in Tenasserim Division were summoned to attend a meeting without fail since it concerned their moving back to their former villages which had been relocated in 1996. Each household was required to send one representative to the meeting on October 3. When the villagers arrived at the meeting place, soldiers from LIB 432 and 342 surrounded them and singled out the able-bodied men and women; around 250 people were taken as porters. (**Source: *HRDU***)

◆ Since October 5, 1998, 400 porters from Tavoy, Yebyu, Launglon and Thayetchaung township in Tenasserim Division have been used at the Bonti-Tavoy highway motor road construction by the IB 224 based in Bokeypin township, Tenasserim. They were ordered to clear the bushes and trees along the motor road between Mitta and Bonti village on the Thai-Burma border. Another 500 porters were sent again on October 12, 1998 and currently about 1,000 porters are being used as forced laborers on the highway construction. (**Source: *HRDU***)

◆ On October 14, 1998, Htun Chit and two of his family members were stopped at a checkpoint of IB 280 stationed at Thuka border gate on the Thai-Burma border. Three of them were on their way back to Burma after working in Thailand. They carried one Honda motorcycle with them. Usually the soldiers at the checkpoint do not pay attention to the people passing the gate who have to pay 100 *bhat* for each as a tax. However, Htun Chit was arrested and sent off with the troops as a porter; his motorcycle was also confiscated. His two female family members did not hear anything about him until they went back to Thailand after waiting three days at the gate. (**Source: *HRDU***)

◆ On October 19, 1998, SPDC troops from LIB 311 ordered the villagers from Muang Tin village, Mung Yawng township, Shan State, to provide bamboo for making a fence for their camp. Each family was forced to provide 300 split-bamboo pieces within three days. On October 25, 1998, column 2 of the SPDC LIB 73 led by commander Soe Paing went into Malardaw village, Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division, and conscripted 50 villagers, including women, to carry supplies to Saw Tay Doe and Keh Podoe village. (**Source: *KIC***)

◆ On October 25, 1998, troops from LIB 311 ordered the villagers from Mung Tin village, Mung Yawng township, Shan State, to provide bamboo for making fences for their military camps. Each family was forced to provide 300 split-bamboo pieces within three days. (**Source: *SHRF***)

◆ On October 27, 1998, a column of IB 73 led by commander Soe Paing collected 38 porters from Malardaw village, Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division, and sent them to Saw Tay Doe village to carry food supplies. (**Source: *KIC***)

◆ Since November 1998, villagers from Thauang Gone and neighboring villages near Kongyan Gone salt fields, Rangoon Division, have been conscripted forcibly to work on these salt fields by the IB 70 commanded by Captain Sein Tin. Villages that cannot supply labor are required to give 9,000 *baht* a week per village. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)

◆ On November 17, 1998 a group of SPDC troops from LIB 432 led by Major Htay

Aung captured three villagers from Kyauk Mechaung village at Hsaw Lomot, Tenasserim township, Tenasserim Division, beat them up and forced them to serve as battlefield porters along with other villagers. After that they took these three villagers to Bokeypin. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On November 21, 1998, SPDC southern command headquarters seized 12 villagers from village tracks in Tantabin Township, Pegu Division, and forcibly used them to transport food supplies to the army camp at Baw Gali village. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On November 27, 1998, troops from IB 35 went into Kaw-thay-doe village, Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and forcibly gathered 30 villagers to carry food supplies to Busu Khee and Naw Soe army camps. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ In December 1998, eight townships in Monywa district, Sagaing Division, were allotted 500 acres each on the Hanthawaddy Land project in Kalaymyo township of Sagaing Division and Gangaw township of Magwe Division. The authorities demanded two villagers to contribute labor from each village tract or each township to work the land. One hundred laborers were required within a month to work once in fifteen days. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ In December, 1998, Yebyu township PDC in Tenasserim Division ordered the villages in the Talaiyar village tract along the Ye-Tavoy motor road to repair the road at their own expense: Talaiyar, Kalone Hta, Dauk Lauk and Padauk Gone villages were affected. Each house hold was assigned to work a section five feet wide and 50 feet long. They were ordered to collect stone and sand with their own expense. Each house was also forced to give 400 *kyat* for tar for the road. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ In December, 1998, villagers from Labine, Theegone, Kyat, Thaminthat, Nyaunggine, Tawa, Khinesha, Wayong, Lattabya and Moke-loke village tracks in Yinmabin township, Sagaing Division, were ordered to work at a project where land was developed for the welfare of public servants. People were forced to supply the labor and they were not given appropriate remuneration. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ In December 1998, Kyauk Michaung, Kwin Shay, Ywa Thit, Ywa Haung, Kyonlung, Phagyi, Ahngan, Kyaung Ywa, Leik Poke and Nga Lay Chaung villages along the motor road between Ye and Leik Poke village in Ye township, Mon State, were ordered to send one villager from each house to work on the renovation project of the motor road of Ye and Like Poke. Each village was ordered to dig two pits which were 6 x 6 x 1 ft each. (**Source: Yoma 3**)

◆ On December 10, 1998, all male villagers from Mae Pu, Mae Chon, Lagun Pyo, Nga Lay, Wah Kha Hta, Bolo Khee, Pa New Law, Htee Pawlaw, Mae Wai and Kyauk Taung villages in Belin township, Mon State, were rounded up and taken as porters for the IB 18 that was responsible for supplying food to Mae Pali, Gagun and Mae Wai outposts in Karen State. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ Between December 10 and 15, 1998, every household in the village tracts of Tamangyi, Kyone Two, Yogyi, Magyikan, Peinkan, Hlabelu, Aleywa, Ayeywa and Sher Kataw was forced to dig one and a half pits at an embankment of Kayan creek situated below the villages of Aleywa and Pagan Taung in kayan and Thanlyin townships, Rangoon Division. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ Since December 10, 1998, LIB 18, which is responsible for transportation to Mae Pali, Gagone and Maewine military outposts, has been arresting every able villager between 12 to 60 years old to work as porters in 19 villages, including Maepu, Maechon, Lagonpyo,

Ngalay, Wakharhta, Bolowkhee, Pa-new-law, Htee Paw Law, Maewine, and Kyattaung, in Belin township, Mon State. (**Source: HRDU**)

- Between December 12 and 15, 1998, every household in the village tracts of Pyinma Gone, Kyini Chaung, Kyong Kan, Nyaungbin Tha, Zeebyubin, and Kinmon Chone was forced to dig two pits at the embankment of Kinmon Chone creek near Kinmon Chong village, Khayan township, Rangoon Division. (**Source: Inside Burma**)
- Between December 27 and 31, 1998, every household in the villages of KamaKalo, Kamamat, Maungma, Paukpin, Kama Pakaw, Oake Po, Maukkathan, Kyutaw and Jone Jone Gya was forced to dig two pits at the embankment of Saema creek situated close to Paukpin village, Khayan township, Rangoon Division. (**Source: Inside Burma**)



The villagers seen at the forced labor site at Ye-Tavoy motor road in Tenasserim Division. They have been ordered to extend the motor road depending on their own food and tools (above and below). (Photo by N.H. Tha, HRDU)





A military officer ordered to the villagers who were forced to work at the Ye-Tavoy motor road extension. (Photo by N.H. Tha, HRDU)



Villagers, including children in T'Nay Hsah (Nabu) township gather in response to an SPDC ordered to go for forced labor cutting, and clearing a road. (Photo by KHRG)



Villagers and KNLA soldiers try to carry to help a villager who stepped on a mine while doing forced labor portering for an SPDC column. Porters who step on mines are often left behind to die by SPDC troops. This porter had his foot blown off. (Photo by FTUB)

Neh Shway Lay, aged 42, a Karen animist farmer, Thi Wah village, southeastern Pa'an district. He fled his village because of abuse and forced labor inflicted by both SPDC and DKBA. In early November 1998



he returned his home. At that time, a column of SPDC and DKBA troops saw him and immediately opened fire. Neh Shway Lay was shot, apparently in the back with an exit wound in his belly. This photo was taken the next day, after the troops had left and the villagers were preparing the body for the funeral.



▲
Villagers in T'Nay Hsah (Nabu) township on their way to the local SPDC Army camp. They were ordered to bring 2 pieces of bamboo each and do forced labor building a security fence around the camp. As the photo shows, parents who have to work for their family's survival often have no choice but to send their children. (Photo by KHRG)
▶



A Karen porter, captured in his fields near Myawaddy town in southern Pa'an district and immediately forced to porter supplies with an SPDC column. After being badly mistreated for 2-3 days and seeing others brutalised, he escaped on February 26, 1999. He fled through the forest in the dark and stumbled over a tripwire rigged to a landmine. He suffered serious wounds to his entire left side, particularly his arm, and his left eye is also damaged. ►



◄ *Maw Toh, Neh Shway Lay's friends who was also opened fire by a column of SPDC and DKBA troops. He was wounded in the thigh but escaped. When the photo was taken he could not walk. (Photo by KHRG)*

5. Forced Relocation and Internally Displaced Persons

5.1 Background

The policy of the SPDC, and before it the SLORC, confronted with any form of armed resistance, has amounted to “draining the ocean so the fish cannot swim”; in other words, to undermine the opposition and attack the civilian population until it can no longer support any opposition. This is the fundamental idea behind the “Four Cuts” policy (cutting supplies of food, funds, recruits and intelligence to the resistance) which General Ne Win initiated in the 1970s. Many villages now being burned by SPDC troops were first burned in 1975 when the Four Cuts policy was first implemented, and some villagers speak of having been on the run from Burmese troops since 1975. But even these villagers say that in the past two to three years things have grown much worse. The direct attacks on the civilian population, characterized by mass forced relocations, the destruction of villages and the village economies, and completely unsustainable levels of forced labor, have now become the central pillar of SPDC policy in non-Burman rural areas of Burma. Where, in the past, two or three villages were destroyed at a time, now 100 villages are destroyed at a time.

Relocation sites are usually found in the plains under military control or near military encampments in hilly areas. Villagers who did not comply with orders or fled and were caught risked being treated as insurgents and were at times shot on sight. While the SPDC units continued to target and seek to isolate armed groups they would periodically return to earlier displaced population sites to confiscate food, destroy crops and paddy, burn and destroy settlements, so as to impose a continuously intensifying “Four-Cuts” strategy. This calculated strategy continued as long as an area harbored ethnic armed groups and was imposed for as long as it took to clear an area of armed groups and protect it from reverting back to those armed groups. This often meant forcibly moving of large portions of the local population and rendering the land sterile.

The current SPDC plan for consolidating control over areas where there is resistance appears to consist of the following steps: (a) mounting a military offensive against the area; (b) forcibly relocating all villages to sites under direct army control and destroying the original villages; (c) using the relocated villagers and others as forced laborers for portering and building military access roads into their home areas; (d) moving in more army units and using the villagers for forced labor to build bases along the access roads; (e) allowing the villagers back to their villages, where they are under complete military control and can be used as a rotating source of extortion money and forced labor, further consolidating control through “development” projects like forced labor farming for the army, etc. If resistance attacks still persist at this last stage, retaliation is carried out against villages by executing village elders, burning houses and other means.

52 Relocation in Shan State

The most serious case of forced relocation and village destruction currently occurring is in central Shan State, where over 1,400 villages have been relocated and destroyed by the SLORC and the SPDC since 1996. An estimated 300,000 people have been made homeless, and at least 80,000 of these have fled to Thailand.

This campaign against civilians is supposedly to undermine the Shan United Revolutionary Army (SURA), a group which used to be part of Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army (MTA) until Khun Sa surrendered to the SPDC in 1996. The SURA has recently united with two other groups, the Shan State Army (SSA) and the Shan State Nationalities Army (SSNA), which signed cease-fire deals with SLORC. The new combined force named itself the Shan State Army (SSA) and has been trying to negotiate with the SPDC, but the junta refuses to recognize it and vows that it will crush it militarily. The SPDC campaign to undermine the SURA and the SSA by destroying civilian villages has been a complete failure, but the junta's response to this failure has simply been to keep expanding the region where its troops are ordered to relocate and destroy every village.

By the end of 1996, the estimated number of villages destroyed was at least 605 in eight townships in Shan State. The numbers rapidly increased, and by the end of March 1998 Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) had compiled a list of 1,478 villages in 11 townships which had been relocated and destroyed: the initial townships of Kun Hing (185 villages), Nam Zang (181), Lai Kha (201), Kay See (364), Murng Kerng (186), Murng Nai (99), and Lang Kher (31), and townships where relocations started in 1997 and 1998, including Murng Pan (61 villages), Murng Peng (24), Loi Lem (129), and Ho Pong (17). In Murng Hsu township, relocations occurred in 1996 but then were discontinued because SURA troops were not operating there.

Some villages have been issued written orders to move, but in most cases the order is just given orally by the local military officer or a passing patrol. Sometimes village leaders of several villages in an area are summoned to meetings and given orders to relocate. The order generally allows them three to seven days, sometimes longer, to get out of their village, after which they are told that all belongings will be destroyed and all villagers shot on sight. The officers give reasons for the relocation, usually accusing the villagers of harboring Shan soldiers or telling them that the civilians must be cleared out so the Shan soldiers can be killed, though in many cases these villages have had little or no contact with Shan soldiers. In the earlier relocations, many villages were ordered to move to more central "consolidation villages", and many others were simply driven out without being told where to go. More recently in 1998, most villages being relocated are being ordered to empty fields beside army camps, motor roads, or large towns such as Kun Hing and Lai Kha, rather than to other villages. Most villagers begin moving their belongings immediately, making several trips to save as much of their food supplies and possessions as possible before the deadline. Those without bullock carts or "trologies" (small motorized Chinese tractors which can haul small carts) find it very difficult to save their possessions in time, particularly if it is a full day's walk or further to the relocation site. In some cases, SPDC troops have confiscated everyone's rice supplies just before the move, then redistributed only a small part of it back to the villagers once they arrive at the relocation site.

Most villagers either move to the relocation sites as ordered or flee toward Thailand;

very few risk staying in their villages or hiding in the nearby forests, because SPDC patrols move through the areas, shooting villagers on sight and often destroying the remains of villages. In some areas military helicopters have been used to search areas the day before armed columns arrive there. Hundreds of villagers have been shot on sight, beaten or stabbed to death, suffocated with plastic bags, drowned, or burned alive in their homes upon being found in their villages or fields after relocation deadlines. The Shan Human Rights Foundation has documented the killings of 664 villagers in the relocation region by SPDC forces during 1997 alone, and this list is far from complete.

Through 1997 and 1998, the SPDC has expanded the relocation area to the east (across the Salween River into Murng Peng township), to the south into Murng Pan township, and to the west of Murng Kerng, Lai Kha and Nam Zang, into Ho Pong and Loi Lem townships. The relocation area already covers over 7,000 square miles, and new refugees arriving in Thailand report that throughout April 1998 the SPDC has been relocating more villages further and further west of Loi Lem, expanding the relocation area almost as far west as Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State. There is no sign that the relocations will abate any time soon. Furthermore, many of the people who were forced to move in 1996 and 1997 have now been forced to move again, and some villagers report that they have been moved from one relocation site to another three or four times since 1996 as the SPDC attempts to consolidate the population further. (*Source:SHRF*)

53. Life in the relocation sites in Shan State

When the relocations began in 1996, villagers were given a few days to move to army-controlled sites near army camps and along supply roads. However, many villagers were simply driven out of their villages and not even told where to go. When this campaign had clearly failed to undermine the Shan armies, the SPDC began ordering people at relocation sites to move yet again, to sites which were even more crowded and central. On February 21, 1997, SPDC troops even shelled Kho Lam relocation site in order to drive the villagers out. Five villagers were killed, including two children. On June 16, 1997, two different SPDC columns massacred villagers at Sai Khao and Tard Pa Ho in Kunhing township. The villagers had SPDC passes to return to their villages to fetch their rice, but these were ignored. At Sai Khao 36 villagers were tied up and machine-gunned, and at Tard Pa Ho 29 villagers were similarly executed, including women and children. The Sai Khao column was led by the region's Tactical Commander himself, and one SPDC officer told a woman whom he secretly released from the massacre that they had received specific orders by radio from higher levels to conduct the massacres.

People at the relocation sites are constantly being used by the SPDC troops as porters for carrying military supplies, forced laborers for building and maintaining army camps, guarding motor roads, clearing roadsides, and maintaining roads. Those in the Lai Kha, Nam Zang and Loi Lem areas were used as forced laborers to build the new military air base near Nam Zang which is now completed, and they have also been used to build railways: first from Shwe Nyaung to Nam Zang, which is now essentially complete and has a small train running on it, and now from Nam Zang southward to Murng Nai and from Shwe Nyaung up the hills to Taunggyi.

Tens of thousands of villagers are struggling to survive in the relocation sites,

where they are constantly used as forced laborers by SPDC troops who give them nothing and even demand part of whatever little food or money they still have. Many are starving, unable to return to their villages or fields for fear of being shot on sight. People in the relocation sites and those who have fled to the towns are now reduced to begging in the streets or along the rural motor roads.

Most young people and entire families who still have any money left are fleeing to Thailand to try to find a way to survive there. More than half the population of some areas has already fled to Thailand. An estimated 80,000-100,000 Shan, Pa-O, Palaung and Lahu refugees have fled to Thailand because of these relocations and related abuses. Currently, most families who still have any money left for the trip are attempting to flee. If they have no money then young people or middle-aged couples walk the entire distance, leaving their families behind if necessary in the hope of getting work in Thailand and returning with money to survive. Most people pay the drivers of passenger trucks to get them to the border, and the entire trip takes three or four stages. Fares are exorbitant, because the drivers have to pay off the soldiers at every SPDC checkpoint along the road. It is common for each passenger to have to pay 5,000 *kyat* or more for a trip of less than 100 km. The passengers must also be able to pay off SPDC soldiers at every checkpoint along the way. As long as they can pay, the SPDC generally lets them pass. However, beginning in late 1997 or early 1998, SPDC troops at the last checkpoints before Thailand have begun confiscating the National Identity Cards of all Shans heading for Thailand. The cardholders are given a receipt and told that they will be able to collect their cards when they return to Burma. A similar method has been used since 1992 to strip Muslim Rohingya refugees of their identification when they flee from Arakan State to Bangladesh. If the refugees later try to go home, the SPDC often denies that they ever lived in Burma.

On arrival in Thailand, the Shan refugees must evade capture and forced repatriation by the Thai authorities. In Thailand they are not recognized as refugees and have no choice but to enter the dangerous market for illegal labor. Many are exploited by their Thai employers, while others end up as bonded laborers in sweatshops or in the sex trade. In March 1998, after SPDC troops had attempted to attack a group of Shan refugees in northwestern Thailand, the Thai authorities for the first time allowed a group of over 200 Shan refugees to move into an existing Karenni refugee camp. However, they still have no recognition as refugees, only as people who “fled fighting” when a battle happened to occur near the MTA’s former headquarters at Ho Murng; so it can be expected, in keeping with the current Thai policy of denying asylum to new refugees, that the Thai Army will attempt to force these people back to Burma once the situation “returns to normal” around Ho Murng and the SPDC indicates its willingness to “accept them back.” (*Source: SHRF*)

54. Relocation in Karenni State

Between April and July 1996, the SLORC issued orders to at least 182 villages in Karenni (Kayah) State to relocate to military-controlled sites within five to seven days. The primary intention was to bring the civilians under tighter military control and cut off any possibility of civilian support for the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP). The other resistance groups in Karenni, the Karenni Nationalities People’s Liberation Front (KNPLF), the Kayan New Land Party (KNLP), and the Shan Nationalities People’s

Liberation Organization (SNPLO), have already made cease-fire deals with the SLORC. However, the KNPP is a significantly larger and older resistance force than the others. The KNPP made a cease-fire deal with the SPDC in March 1995, but the SLORC simply used the cease-fire as a cover to move its troops into offensive positions and then broke the cease-fire by launching an offensive against the KNPP in June 1996. The bulk of the forced relocations were implemented at the same time. Fighting has been ongoing ever since, despite the false SLORC/SPDC claim that the KNPP surrendered in 1996 and that there has been no fighting in Karenni since then. Currently the bulk of the fighting is in the southern part of the state, in both the southeast and the southwest.

The villages affected by the forced relocations cover more than half the geographic area of the state and are home to at least 20,000-30,000 people. They were given no more than a week to move to the army-specified sites, and the written orders issued to their villages stated that after that week they would be considered as enemy troops and shot on sight if seen in their villages by SLORC/SPDC patrols. After receiving the relocation orders many people fled into the forest, while others went to the specified relocation sites, unable to take anything more than their children and whatever load they could carry on their backs for the often long walk through the hills. Some of the sick and elderly had no choice but to remain behind in their villages because they were not physically capable either of fleeing or of undertaking the long walk to the relocation sites. However, the SPDC was true to its word, and shortly thereafter patrols started sweeping the villages area by area, taking anything of value that was left and then burning all signs of habitation. Villagers caught in these areas were either forced to relocation sites or shot on sight.

Since the beginning of 1998, there are reports that the SPDC has now begun relocating and destroying villages in northern Karenni along the Shan State border. This had been one of the few areas where villagers could still live because it was protected by the Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front (KNPLF), which had a cease-fire deal with SPDC. The area also provided refuge to some villagers fleeing the relocations in other parts of the state. However, under the SPDC these cease-fire deals no longer appear to carry any weight when villages are to be destroyed. (*Source: KNAHR*)

55. Life in the relocation sites in Karenni State

Some people still try to remain hidden in the forest, but most gave in to the order and moved to the relocation sites, which were scattered through out the state at Shadaw, Ywathit, Mawchi, Pah Saung, Baw La Keh, and other smaller locations. As more villages were relocated, more sites were created. All were under complete control of the army, usually located adjacent to new or existing army bases.

In the relocation sites the army provided nothing at first; villagers had to find materials to build their own shelters and were reliant on whatever food they had brought along with them. Within weeks many started going hungry and getting sick from lack of food and good water. In response, the SLORC officers controlling most of the sites gave permission for villagers to return to their villages for one week, as their last chance to bring food, belongings, livestock and supplies. For most villagers one week only allowed them time for one trip on foot, so it was impossible to bring back anything that would support them for very long. However, many took the opportunity to bring back whatever they

could, while many others used it to go into hiding in the forest or to attempt to escape to the Karenni refugee camps already existing in Thailand. They had seen what life held for them in the relocation sites, and they were determined not to go back.

In the relocation sites the situation started off badly and has only deteriorated over time. In the beginning the troops at many of the sites forced the villagers to hand over whatever rice they had brought, then rationed it out to everyone. This rice only lasted a short time, then most of the villagers received nothing. When more began to starve, the troops began issuing rations consisting of rice and sometimes salt. At first each person received one *pyi* [about 2 kg] of rice each three days, but this was soon cut back to one *pyi* per week, less than half what a person needs to survive. Currently, villagers in the relocation sites only receive this, or even less. Aid organizations and the Catholic Church (many Karenni villagers are Catholic) have attempted to provide food and other aid for the people in the relocation sites, but the SPDC will not allow them into the sites and usually insists that any aid must be given to the army, which can then distribute it; generally when this is done in Burma the army simply keeps the aid. It is not clear where the rice currently being issued to the villagers is coming from; it may be from the Church, or it may be from the rice which the SPDC is now forcing all farmers in Karenni to hand over for nothing. Farmers in areas which have not been forced to relocate now have to hand over at least one third of their crop to the army, while others have been ordered to grow a second crop in the dry season (which requires irrigation, is harmful to the land and threatens the main wet season crop because it prolongs the life of insects and parasites). All of this dry season crop has to be given to the army. It is almost certain that the SPDC is either being given or stealing the rice from somewhere, because it goes against its normal practice ever to give anything to villagers in relocation sites.

Villagers at some sites try to find paid labor just outside the camps, but the surrounding villages have already been made destitute by SPDC looting, extortion and crop confiscation, so there is very little paid work to be found. Even though the villagers have little or no food to eat, the SPDC in most relocation sites refuses to allow them to cultivate any land. One exception is Nwa La Bo relocation site north of Loikaw, where permission was given for villagers to farm outside the camp; however, they had to pay 50 *kyats* each time they wanted to leave the camp, and permission is often suspended for various reasons, so many of the crops have failed from neglect. In Nwa La Bo the army forces villagers to go and work in a nearby army vegetable plantation several times a month; the soldiers tell them the vegetables are for the people in the relocation site, but the people there never see them.

Most of the relocation sites have insufficient water for the people living there, and people often have to walk long distances to get water, or also use unclean water. Disease is a very serious problem in the relocation sites; the KNPP believes that at least 300 people have died of treatable illnesses in the sites since 1996, and the testimony of villagers who have lived in the sites appears to bear this out. Villagers who have escaped from the sites regularly state that every member of their family was sick, that at least one person in each family was sick, or that they knew of several people dying of disease every month. The major killers appear to be malaria, diarrhoea, and dysentery, though respiratory ailments, skin diseases, and almost every infection and parasite which exists in the region are also widespread. There are medical clinics in some of the relocation sites and pharmacies in

some of the adjacent villages, but the clinics will only treat villagers if they can pay a cash bribe on top of having to buy their own medicines from the pharmacies, and the medicines are extremely expensive. Most villagers in the relocation sites have no money to pay either the bribe or the price of the medicines, and many have died as a direct result of this.

Some of the relocation sites have basic schools and Buddhist monasteries, but there appears to be a policy of forbidding the construction of Christian churches. Villagers have repeatedly been denied permission to build churches in the sites, even though a large proportion of the Karenni population is Christian, primarily Roman Catholics followed by Baptists. When the forced relocations first occurred, some of the Catholic priests and lay preachers from the villages were told to go to Loikaw and stay among the church representatives there rather than go to the relocation sites with the other villagers.

Even though the villagers are going hungry and struggling to survive, SPDC troops controlling the camps still make them perform forced labor on a daily or weekly basis. The villagers are forced to build and maintain army camps in the area, to build fences, dig bunkers, cultivate land for the army, cut firewood, haul water to hilltop army camps and, do other general servant's work, haul army rations to the hilltops when they are delivered, and sometimes to go as porters with SPDC patrols, although currently the troops take many of their porters from among the prisoners in Loikaw jail. The villagers are not given any money or any extra food for this labor. Relocated villagers are also being used as forced laborers to build at least two roads: the 96-mile road from Mawchee westward across Karen State to Taungoo, and a short road near Loikaw from the base of IB 269 to the village of Ye Yaw. Families in Mawchee relocation site and in the town itself have to send one person each day to work on the Mawchee-Taungoo road; families are each given an assignment and must stay at the road, eating their own food until it is finished. This road is supposed to facilitate the transport of minerals from the Mawchee mine into central Burma. However, the road was already rebuilt once in the 1970s, and then it only lasted two months before it was destroyed by the rains. The same is likely to happen again.

At most of the relocation sites the troops no longer guard the perimeter very tightly because the villagers have no choice but to scavenge for food outside the camp. Many villagers have taken advantage of this opportunity and fled into the forests, usually to go and live in hiding back around their old villages. They join the others still there, many of whom have already been living in hiding for close to two years now. Most of the villagers in hiding are staying in the forests somewhere near their old village. Almost all of the relocated villages have now been burned and completely destroyed by SPDC patrols, but most villagers had some food supplies and belongings hidden in caves or small storage barns in the forest and have been able to live off this for some time. Those who have been in hiding for any length of time have already exhausted their supplies, and are trying to live by growing small crops in parts of their long-overgrown fields, or by finding the hidden food supplies of other villagers who have long since gone to the relocation sites or to Thailand. Those who remain have no access to medicines, and many have already died of disease.

The SPDC still sends patrols into the abandoned villages, area by area, seeking out Karenni forces or villagers in hiding. Many villagers stay together with groups of Karenni soldiers for some form of protection. The soldiers sometimes have limited supplies of medicine and some rations, both of which they share when possible with villagers who are

particularly desperate. Villagers can only stay in small groups of two or three families to minimize the chance of detection. Those who are not staying with Karenni troops stay in small shelters in the forest, often taking turns as sentries to watch for any SPDC troops coming their way. Once in a while the patrols find their shelters and they must flee to another place, and once in a while they are seen and shot by SPDC patrols. Even if they are only wounded they are likely to end up dead, because the troops will either finish them off with a knife or leave them to die in the forest because of the impossibility of getting treatment or medicines. Despite all these difficulties, more and more villagers are choosing this way of life over the slow death offered by the relocation sites.

Immediately following the biggest wave of forced relocations in June/July 1996, about 3,000 people arrived at existing Karenni refugee camps in Thailand. A few months later after the rainy season another 1,300 arrived. Since that time there has only been a slow trickle of people crossing the border into Thailand. Groups of 60 or 70 reached the refugee camps in January 1998 and then again in March. Most of these people have finally fled to Thailand because they found that there was no way they could survive any longer in the relocation sites or in hiding. They say that they did not make the trip previously for several reasons: that they were determined to stay near their land if there was any way to survive there, that many of the sick, weak and elderly were unable to make the long trip over the hills through abandoned areas of burned and destroyed villages, that there are no boats crossing the big rivers anymore, and primarily that the SPDC has sent so many troops into the area between the Salween River and the Thai border that it is almost impossible to get through without getting caught, especially if travelling with children and the elderly. Access to the Thai border is almost completely blocked for these people. (*Source: KNAHR*)

5.6 Karen State

Relocation in Dooplaya district

Dooplaya District of central Karen State, a large region which stretches from the Myawaddy-Kawkareik-Kyone Doh motor road in the north to the Three Pagodas Pass area in the south, was largely controlled by the Karen National Union (KNU) until 1995. In that year a major SLORC offensive completed SLORC's control of the Thai border from Myawaddy southward to Wah Lay and captured the northern part of the "hump", a mountainous portion of Dooplaya which projects eastward into Thailand. In a much larger offensive in February-March 1997, the SPDC succeeded in capturing almost all of the remainder of Dooplaya district. Over 10,000 new refugees fled to Thailand and are now interned in Noh Po refugee camp, but most villagers remained inside the district, either trapped by the speed of the SPDC advance or hoping to survive under the SPDC occupation. Many of these villagers have subsequently fled or tried to flee to Thailand due to forced labor and other abuses by the occupying troops.

After occupying areas such as Dooplaya, normal SPDC practice is forcibly to relocate all small or remote villages to garrison villages where they are under direct military control, then to use the villagers as forced laborers building and servicing new military camps in the area and to build military access roads into the area. This has been the case

during the one-year occupation of Doolplaya, though it has been enacted in various ways and to varying extents in different parts of the region.

In January 1998, many Karen villages in the far south of Doolplaya were forced by SPDC IB. 230 to relocate to Thanbyuzayet and Three Pagodas Pass. Meh K'Naw, Meh K'Wa, Htee Kay, Htee Kilh Thu, Lay May, Htee Po Yu, Ah Pa Lone, Lay Po, Hsing Pyay, Kwih Prer Htee, Maw Po and other villages were given three days to move, after which several houses in each village were burned and Meh K Naw and Htee Maw Keh villages were burned completely. Suffering from a lack of food at the relocation site, the villagers finally managed to get permission to return to their villages, but they have to pay extortion money regularly to IB 230 and go on rotating shifts of three days portering labor. Anyone who cannot go must pay 1,000 *kyat*.

In the latter part of 1997 several other villages in southern Doolplaya were forced to move to Taung Zone (aka. Lay Noh) and Anand Gwin (aka. Noh Chut Neh) along the road from Thanbyuzayut to the Three Pagodas Pass, and Knerh Kamaw and Gkar near the Ye-Thabyuzayut motor road.

Several villages in the Kya-ein-seik-kyi area of western Doolplaya, such as T'Ka Kee, Toh Kee and Kalay Kee, have been forced to move and the villagers have been scattered. In central Doolplaya, many pockets of remote villages were forced to move, such as K'Lan Lay, Dta Ri and Htee Po Ghaw, which were forced to Dta Nay Pya.

The general practice has been to force small and remote villages to move to larger villages which are more directly under the control of SPDC troops. In many villages, particularly in central Doolplaya, orders were issued for all villagers living in houses or farm field huts outside the villages to move into the center of their villages. In southern and western Doolplaya some of the relocations have not been rescinded, but many of the villagers in Doolplaya who were forced to relocate were later allowed to go back to their villages after complaining that they could not farm or earn their living. Even so, villagers who live in remote areas or out in their fields always run by high risk of being caught for porters or shot by patrolling SPDC troops. Relocations continue to be ordered sporadically whenever and wherever the KNLA activities flare up. In areas of southern and western Doolplaya where villagers cannot get permission to return to their home villages, they have no choice but to try to find a living at relocation villages or in the villages of their relatives. This is extremely difficult, because these places tend to be quite strongly SPDC-controlled, often even having an SPDC base right at the village, so the relocated villagers are used all the time for forced labor and have trouble paying all the extortion fees levied on them.

At least 700 families remain internally displaced in central Doolplaya, not daring to go back to their villages but afraid to escape to Thailand. Most of them are villagers who could no longer bear the burden of rotating forced labor but had no money to pay to avoid it, while some are villagers who fled the initial SPDC offensive and went into the forest, are afraid that if they return to their villages now they will be arrested and suspected of contact with the KNLA. Some of these families had already fled to Thailand once but were forced back by the Thai authorities; some of them were among the group which was shot by Thai troops at Thay Pu Law Htwee in November 1997. There are also scattered families of internally displaced villagers in the south of Doolplaya near the Three Pagodas Pass-Thanbyuzayut road, who fled the forced relocations of villages in the area in late 1997 and early 1998 and are now living in hills. Several thousand people from southern Doolplaya

have fled southward to Mon-held areas since the occupation in early 1997, and some people continue to flee in that direction. The SPDC regularly issues orders for these people to return to their villages, but they dare not for fear of arrest. They stay in small groups of shelters in the forest, fleeing from one shelter to another every month or every two months when a SPDC patrol comes near their shelters. Each family has four or five shelters and two or three rice fields, scattered in different places so that they can keep ahead of SPDC patrols. Because they always have to move, they have difficulty growing or obtaining enough food, and they have no access whatsoever to medicines. Many of these people have already died of disease, particularly children and the elderly. (*Source: KHRG*)

Pa-an District

Forced relocation is increasingly becoming the cornerstone of SPDC military practice throughout Burma, and in mid-1998 the military appeared to become much more serious about forcibly relocating villages in southeastern Pa-an district, Karen State, as well as those further north in the Dawna Range. In the southeast, the DKBA called all village headmen in the area to a meeting in Ker Ghaw in the middle of the rainy season, at which they announced an SPDC order that all villages will be forced to move to Kwih Lay, Sgaw Ko or Ker Gkaw as soon as rice harvest is finished at the end of 1998. Villages which will be forced to move include Taw Oak, Meh Pleh Toh, Toh Thu Kee and other villages not directly controlled by the SPDC; the complete list is unclear, because some villagers believe that Sgaw Ko and Kwih Lay will be forced to move, while others believe that these villages will be used as relocation sites. At the meeting the DKBA stated that anyone who remains in the relocated villages “will be in our gun sights.” The reason they have given such early notification may have been to encourage the villagers to start moving out now and this is having its desired effect. Many villagers have already fled Taw Oak, Sgaw Ko and other villages in the area while they can still choose where to go, rather than wait for SPDC soldiers to drive them out at gunpoint.

Further north in the eastern Dawna the SPDC has taken a much more direct approach to forcing the villagers to move. In August they launched a military operation named “Aung Moe Hein” using troops from LI Division 44. The intent appears to be to drive the entire civilian population out of the area with little care for where they go. Villagers already began fleeing the area in late August 1998; 1,500 villagers fled across the border into Thailand and others fled higher into the hills of the Dawna Range. Then in September, the LI Division 44 troops formed three columns of approximately 100 soldiers each and destroyed several villages, causing another 1,600 or more villagers to flee to Thailand from Po Ti Pwa, Ma Oh Pu, Tha Pwith Hser, Tee K’Haw, Wah Mi Klah, B’Nweh Pu, Po Paw Lay, Meh Lah Ah Hta, Meh Lah Ah Kee, Meh Keh, and Klay Poo Kloh. Refugees from most of these villages say they never received any relocation order, villages were simply attacked without warning. In Wah Mi Klah village, the villagers did not flee, but the SPDC troops still burned at least one house, killed the livestock and took villagers to be porters. As result, all the remaining villagers in these and other villages in the area fled higher into the hills, and over 3,000 villagers fled across the border into Thailand. The assault troops have now based themselves in the area, so none of the villagers dare return and have had to abandon their crops and most of their possessions. (*Source: KHRG*)

Taungoo District

All of the villages in the hills away from the vehicle roads and army camps in Taungoo district, Karen State, are considered by the SPDC to be part of the “black” area. The SPDC has not yet been able to extend its control effectively into the hills so it would like to see the entire area depopulated, and to accomplish this the troops have been ordering villages to move, capturing or killing villagers they find in the hills while on patrol, destroying crops and food supplies and sometimes burning houses.

The villages of Hsaw Wah Der, Bu Sah Kee, Wah Tho Ko, Der Doh, Maw Ko Der, Bpeh Gkaw Der, Ko Pler Der, Ko Kler Der, Kler Kaw Day, Kaw Soh Ko and Klay Soe Kee have all been ordered to move to Baw Gali village. This list is far from complete, and in fact every village in the hills of Taungoo district which is not adjacent to a road or a military camp has been ordered to relocate in 1998. Some, such as Hsaw Wah Der and Bu Sah Kee, have been repeatedly ordered to move over the past three years, while most of the others received orders to move throughout 1998. The number of forced relocation orders appears to have increased since the completion of the road from Baw Gali Gyi to Bu Sah Kee in 1997. Following orders to move, villagers say that troops burned houses and field huts in several villages, including Bu Sahn Kee, Hsaw Wah Der, Sho Hta, Paw Baw Soe, Si Kheh Der, Plaw My Der, Ghaw Kee, Tha Aye Kee, Maw Ko Der, Blah Kee, Pwih Kee, Oo Per, Htee Hsah Bper, Ko Go Der and Sho Ko. In most cases only some of the houses in the villages were burned, but afterwards each passing patrol burns down more houses and farm field huts, particularly wherever they see evidence of continued habitation.

Most of the orders to relocate were delivered directly by patrols passing through the villages, telling the villagers that they had to get out within seven to fifteen days and afterwards would be shot if seen in the area. Villagers who have moved as ordered say that on arrival in Baw Gali Gyi, a large village of 300-400 households, they were told to build bamboo huts outside the village but were given no assistance whatsoever by the authorities. Some people from nearby villages helped them, but for the most part they had to cut and haul the bamboo themselves. No bamboo was available locally because the large population of Baw Gali Gyi had used all of it, so this required going long distances to obtain bamboo and leaves for roofing. The relocated villagers had to survive on whatever food they had with them and most could find no way to growing food or earning a livelihood, so many of them left and returned to the area of their villages to hide in the forests. (*Source: KHRG*)

57. Tenasserim Division

Moe Htaung area development project

Villages along the road between Tavoy and Moe Htaung border town in Tenasserim Division were ordered to move by the SPDC battalions under the command of No. 13 Operation Control Headquarters in November, 1998. With the claims of Moe Htaung border area development project, two model concentration villages were set up by the military in the region. Villages nearby were ordered to relocate to Kyein Chaung Hle Seik model village and Kyein Chaung Hle Pyu model village. Both model villages are under the

direct control of LIB 558 under the No. 13 Operation Control Headquarters. Villagers in the newly-established model villages are being ordered to work on road construction and cultivation projects run by the military. Due to the economic hardship and high demand of forced labor in these two model villages, 130 villagers of the 21 households from Kyein Chaung Hle Seik model village escaped on November 3 to Thai-Burma border. They arrived at the border on November 11. After finding out about the escape of the villagers from the model village, soldiers from LIB 558 issued an order saying that no villagers would be allowed to go out without permission. Anyone would be shot dead if found outside the village. People in the two model villages are starving and unable to earn money in the camps. (*Source: HRDU*)

Tavoy township

Villagers who lived on the eastern bank of Gamone Thwe creek in Myee Khan Baw village tract, Tavoy township, Tenasserim Division, were ordered to relocate to the western bank of creek. Commander of IB 25 based in Tavoy summoned the village headmen from eight villages in Myee Khan Baw village track on December 21, 1998 and ordered them to relocate. The name of the villages were See Pyone, Myee Khan Baw, Kami, Nyaungdon, Hnin Payoke, Kyetha Inn, Thabyu Chaung and Pyinthataw. This relocation order was caused by recent fighting between the SPDC and KNU on December 17, 1998. Nine SPDC soldiers were killed and 19 were wounded in the fighting.

In May 1998, Kyauk Htone, Thabyu Chaung, Maw Lekay and Myintmo Letkhet villages in Tavoy township, Tenassaerim Division, were forcibly ordered to relocate to Phaungdaw village by the SPDC LIB 4 and IN 75, under the command of Division.66. In order to exert pressure to the villagers to relocate, SPDC troops have cut all food supplies to the villages since May 1998. Due to threats and pressure by the SPDC, some have relocated to the new site, but about 1,500 people have fled to Thai-Burma border. They arrived at the border on May 20, 1998. (*Source: HRDU*)

Palaw township

In Tenssarim Division, relocation programs began on the western coast in Palaw township in particular, starting during the 1997 rainy season and resumed in the 1998 dry season. Palaw is among five townships in Mergui district. The area is divided into two parts by an upper and lower car road. All the villages situated in the upper car road near the mountains are Karen villages. The KNLA used to be active in this area. The lower car road is close to the coast where there are Burmese and some Karen villages. This area is mainly controlled by the Burma army. Before 1997, this area was under the KNLA control.

Karen villagers have faced mass relocations since 1997. After the SPDC took control of the Tenasserim River region in 1997, the KNLA movement was still active in Palaw township. This caused problems for the SPDC as their military transportation was constantly disrupted by the KNLA. To suppress the KNLA movement, the SPDC started relocating the Karen villages situated along the upper car road close to this transportation route. Some villagers went to the relocation sites. Many fled and are hiding behind their villages or at

the heads of mountain streams. Villages situated along the lower car road were forced to consolidate and were either relocated beside the road, to villages that the SPDC fully controlled, or to designated relocation sites.

The Karen villages situated along the upper car road were all relocated. The whole upper car road region has been made a free-fire zone. Most of the villagers did not go to the SPDC designated relocation site but moved deeper into the jungle to avoid ongoing persecution by the the SPDC. They tried to avoid forced labor, the extortion of money, portering duties and fees, work at military camps and other abuses. Villagers near the lower road could not easily flee to the jungle because they were deep in an SPDC controlled area and far from the jungle.

At the relocation sites, villagers are not let out without SPDC authorities or Burmese army permission. If they want to leave the compound they have to get a pass, which gives permission to leave from the morning till the evening only. Most of the villagers that lived along the lower car road, or those relocated are able to go to their fields and gardens in the morning and return in the evening.

Villagers relocated to another village, road or designated site further from their original village face worse conditions. They cannot return to tend their fields and gardens, and they were not allowed to bring their rice or paddy when relocated. They have no livelihood or income. A few leave looking for work at nearby Burmese villages, but most cannot. At the relocation site they have to buy rice and other food, firewood and water. The worst known is Palawgone relocation site, located in a field, far from the original villages. It is hot and the inmates have to buy water.

At the relocation sites, the military can easily demand forced labor and porters. Villagers have been ordered to build military camps, dig foxholes, make traps, fences and clear bushes around the camps.

At relocation sites the troops demands various fees from the villagers. The main types of fees demanded include portering fees, fee to cover the expenses of soldiers, the cost of building schools, and compensation if attacked by the KNLA. On February 17, 1998, the KNLA attacked a group of SPDC soldiers and *Pyithusit* (militia) at Gaing Kyi village in Palaw township. Two SPDC soldiers died and five were wounded. On February 26, 1998, money was demanded from villagers at the Palawgone relocation site, where everyone is Karen, for medicine to treat the injured soldiers and militia. Each house had to pay 500 *kyat*. They also demanded 450 *kyat* from each household in Palawgone village where all the villagers are Burmese. The villagers do not have a lot of money but they were afraid of the troops. So they either borrowed money from other villagers or sold valuable possessions. There is systematic extortion by the military.

Villagers in hiding live some distance from each other. They have built small huts to hide their paddy, food supplies, and other materials. The major concern is that the SPDC army will come and find them.

Between January and March 1998, the SPDC and militia searched for villagers hiding in Mi Chaung Theit stream area four times. Other areas have been searched. Houses, barns and plantations found have been burnt down. The SPDC accused the villagers who were hiding and supplying the KNLA with food, and being a KNLA village volunteer force. Villagers seen were arrested. Sometimes villagers were shot on sight, probably when they did not stop running away. Women arrested were taken to the battalion's camp. Most

of the arrested male villagers were tortured, and later killed. The Burmese army used them first as guides to show the way to other hiding Internally Displaced Persons. If any IDPs were captured or surrendered to the SPDC army, other villagers nearby immediately moved. (*Source: Burma Issue*)

5.8 List of incidents

◆ In January 1998, Karens villages in Kawkareik district, were ordered to relocate to the new designated areas. The SPDC battalions ordered Htee Panweh, Htee Gor, Htee Par Doh, Phoo Chee Khee, Htee Wah Doh, Htee Kay, Pa Deh Padaw to Phoo Chee village, Gaza Pokee to Gaza village, Goleh, Kah Kyaw Kee, Meh Nona, Htee Lorbele and Kyauk Meh to Kyaik Rauk village. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ In January 1998, the SPDC troops ordered the villages in Wun Yay townships to relocate to the designated areas. They ordered Apalon and Tatdain villages to move to Taungzun village, Erkawaw and Meh Kawa villages to Kyauk Baloo village, Pawa Theh and Koo Pathehta villages to Beh Lamut village, Thakethem Saw Kyaw Kee Leh and Garta villages to Kanerkamot village, Wah Morlay and three other villages to Not Chu Mor village, Htee Nerkee, Wah Mee Khot and Taung Galay villages to Ma Ure village. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ In February 1998, after the battle between the SSA-east and the SPDC in Ho Murng, SPDC troops ordered the villages of Nawng Kham, Nam Kat, Nawng Aw, Kharn Mon, Nam Lin, Nawng Yao, Ho Murng, Nawng Leng, Long Zerk, Tak Let, Nar Mai Lur, Nar Mai and Khong Long in Ho Murng area, Shan State, to relocate in a central place. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On February 28, 1998, troops from IB 230 led by Major Maung Maung Naing ordered the Karen villages situated on either side of the Zami River in Kya-in-seik-kyi township, Karen State to relocate. The troops did not indicate the place to which to relocate, but they threatened anyone with being shot dead if they were found again in the region. (*Source: MIS*)

◆ On March 9, 1998, Ta Wah village near Loikaw, Karenni State was forced to relocate to Wa Lu Hu, where there is an SPDC base. The villagers were forced to move by LIB 337. The village had 70-100 houses. After the villagers moved, their village was burned down by SPDC troops. (*Source: KNWO*)

◆ On March 20, 1998, Pata and Beh Kee villages in Karenni State were relocated to Wa Lu Hu, this time by LIB 427. Each village had about 50 households. After the move, the villages were burned. The villages had received the order to move on March 1, telling them that they had until March 7 to move. Pata and Beh Kee villages are in Wa Lu Hu village tract, Karenni State. (*Source: KNWO*)

◆ On April 10, 1998, troops from LIB 284 drove out 15 Karen families living in Kyon Kwe village in Kawkareik township. (*Source: MIS*)

◆ On May 25, 1998, the SPDC troops ordered Noe Gaw village, Kyaukkyi township Karen State to relocate either to Kyaukkyi town or Klaw Maw Kho village within the month of June. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On May 25, 1998, troops from LIB 355 led by Captain Saw Aung ordered the Karen villagers living at Sekkwet village in Kawkareik township, Karen State, to abandon

from the village immediately. He warned that there would be a harsh punishments for those who failed to obey the order. (*Source: MIS*)

◆ In June 1998, a military column led by Major Aung Khaing from LIB 231 and Captain Zaw Min Nyunt from LIB 545 arrived at Kaw Mar village, Kyar-in-seik-kyi township, Karen State. The villagers were accused of supporting the KNU and were ordered to move to Palaw Htoo Ki village in the tract. The names of the affected villages were Kaw Mar, Htee Wah Doe, Htee Kyaw Kee, Ya Kayar and Khaw Khet, all in Kaw Mar village track. (*Source: Yoma 3*)

◆ The SPDC's "Aung Moe Hein" operation, which aims to relocate villages in the Dawna range, Karen State, started in late August 1998. The operation is employing Division No. 44, commanded by Division Commander Toe Aung. LIB 3, LIB 9, LIB 118 and IB 81 (totalling about 900 soldiers) are being employed in Pine Kyone township and the rest of the Division's battalions have been sent to the area between Myawaddy and Pine Kyone for the same purpose. (*Source: KHRG*)

◆ Over 300 Karenni people from Don Poe, Pan Aw and Kay Do villages, Hso Mo township, who were located on Karenni-Shan border, were forcibly relocated into Wam Matt village center by the 29 August at 6 a.m deadline of given by Shadaw-based LIB 423 led by Maj. Thein Lwin. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On April 10, 1998, the LIB 284 displaced 15 Karen families living at Kyon Kwe village in Kawkareik township, Karen State, by destroying their houses. (*Source: MIS*)

◆ In the first week of May 1998, troops from LIB 230 ordered the Karen villagers living at Ka Toe Hta, Aung Laing, Sekkawet and Myo Haung in Kawkareik township, Karen State to move from their villages immediately. (*Source: MIS*)

◆ On May 2, 1998, IB 230 ordered the Karen villagers living in Katoke Hta village in Kyar-ein-seik-kyi township, Karen State, to vacate from the site in two days, telling them that they would be subjected to brutal measures if they did not act as ordered. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ Mae La-a, Mae Keh and Wah Mee Kho villages in Papun district, Karen State, have been burned down since the start of September. Mae La-a Khee, Wah Mee Klar, Htee Ka Haw, Pali Pu, Po Paw Lay, Nei Po Khee, Klay Po Klo and Ma Oh Pu, in the same region, have also been destroyed. LIB 9, which destroyed Mae La-a and Mae Keh villages, looted villagers' property and killed all livestock before setting the villages alight. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On October 18, 1998, about 80 soldiers from IB 247 led by commander Htun Win came to Nawng Pha village, Murng Nai township, Shan State. They arrested village headman Zitta in connection with a Shan armed group. When he said he knew nothing about the Shan armed group, the troops tortured him severely. After releasing him, the commander ordered Nawng Pha village to move to Ton Hoong village, Murng Nai township, within three days. The troops then continued to Waeng Kao village and Hota village to move to the same village within three days. The commander said no one would be allowed and have orders to come to the village and anyone found there would be shot dead. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On October 20, 1998, LIB 502 ordered Long Kaeng village in Murng Pan township, Shan State, to move to Murng Pan town. About 40-50 troops from LIB 502 led by commander Aye Thaung arrested the village headman and wrongfully accused him of not reporting an ethnic Shan group's activities to the army. He was tortured and the whole

village was ordered to move to Murng Pan town within three days. (**Source: SHRF**)

- On November 14, 1998, troops led by commander Aung Myint from LIB 502 in Murng Pan township, Shan State, came to Pakhar village, Murng Pan township, They ordered the villagers to move to Ho Phai Long village and Murng Pan town. (**Source: SHRF**)

- On December 15, 1998, Intelligence Officer, Captain Than Oo from IB 230 came to Meh Kanaw and Meh Kawa villages in Kawkareik township, Karen State, and ordered the villagers to move to Kyauk Baloo village in Wun Yae township within a week. (**Source: KIC**)

- On December 20, 1998, about 50 SPDC soldiers from Murang Tyon-based IB 225 killed the headman and villagers of Nar Niu village, seven miles west of Murng Ton town, Shan State. They were accused of tipping off the Shan armed group to ambush the SPDC troops. After the killing, the soldiers ordered Nar Niu village to move to the town. (**Source: SHRF**)



Villagers in Kawkareik township who have ben ordered to move from their village to an Army-controlled relocation site. The woman in front is unable to walk and therefore must be carried. (Photo by KHRG)



Saw Shwe Muh, Dta Kaw Der village, Ler Doh township. On December 12, 1998 he was transplanting paddy with two friends in the fields, and troops from LIB 368 Column 2, under the command of Maj. Ye Myint Oo, saw them and shot at them. Saw Shwe Muh was hit in the thigh. The troops then entered Dta Kaw Der village and burned down the entire village, so the villagers fled into hiding in the forest. (Photo by KHRG)



Saw Pah Lah Hseh, aged 32, Kheh Der village, Ler Doh township, being treated by a Krean medical team after stepping on an SPDC landmine laid by Column 2 of LIB 368. The front half of his foot was blown off. (Photo by KHRG)



Internally displaced villagers from Dta Meh Der and Dta Paw Der villages in Ye Mu Plaw village tract. Many villagers in the area have been shelled and burned, and SPDC patrols still pass through the area hunting for villagers in hiding. (Photo by KHRG)



Displaced villagers in southeastern Pa'an district trying to survive in hiding in the forest in late 1998. (Photo by KHRG)



Internal displaced villagers who were ordered to move from their villages by the SPDC troops in Mon State. (Photo by S. Han, HRDU)



A village destroyed by the SPDC troops and villagers were forced to move from their village, Mon State. (Photo by S. Han, HRDU)



A child was standing stair of his school which was destroyed by the SPDC troops in Mon State. (Photo by S. Han, HRDU)



Internally displaced woman and her baby in a shelter. The SPDC patrols came and burned down her village, Mon State. (Photo by S. Han, HRDU)



Myo Haun village, Kawkareik township. In September 1998 SPDC troops burned some of the houses and took all the wood from others in order to force the villagers to move. (Photo by KHRG)



Meh K'Naw village, Kawkareik township. On January 6, 1998 SPDC troops from IB 230 commanded by Pai Naing, burned 31 houses in the village and all their rice supplies. The troops ordered Meh K'Naw and 10 other villages to move to Three Pagodas Pass. (Photo by KHRG)



Destroyed rice barn in Set Ka Set village, Kawkareik township. SPDC troops ordered the villagers to move to an army-controlled site in late 1997, then later burned their rice storage and all the rice. (Photo by KHRG)



Abandoned houses of Kya In Lay Wah Ploh village, which was forced to relocate by SPDC LIB 357 in 1998. (Photo by KHRG)



Villagers in hiding in a temporary shelter in the forest, Kawkareik township. Their village was forced to move, and since then these villagers have been living in the forest and trying to tend to their fields. (Photo by KHRG)



The villagers from Kyauk Kyi (Ler Doh) township, Naung Lebin District, flee from their hut as SPDC troops approach. (Photo by KHRG)



Displaced persons who were forced to move out of Mandalay. These people were living in bamboo shelters (above and below). (Photo by HRDU)



6. Deprivation of Livelihood

6.1 Background

In November 1997 the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) military junta ruling Burma changed its name to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). However, there was no change in the four key leaders of the junta, and judging by the testimonies of villagers throughout Burma and the continuation of all of the regime's military operations, there has been no change in policy; in fact, the forced relocations and related abuses occurring in many rural parts of the country have only intensified, making it appear that the SPDC regime is even more ruthless and repressive than the SLORC ever was.

In order to gain the control, the military continues to expand at a rate far beyond the means of the junta or the country. In many regions, particularly the central and urban areas, the military has already established near-complete control, but in remoter areas, such as the ethnic areas towards all the borders, it has only partial or no control, and in some of these regions there is still armed resistance. The policy of the SPDC, and before it the SLORC, in the case of any form of armed resistance is to "drain the ocean so the fish cannot swim"; in other words, undermine the opposition by attacking the civilian population until it can no longer support any opposition. This is the fundamental idea of the "Four Cuts" policy (cutting supplies of food, funds, recruits and intelligence to the resistance) which General Ne Win initiated in the 1970s. The current SPDC plan for consolidating control over areas where there is resistance appears to consist of the following steps: (a) mounting a military offensive against the area; (b) forcibly relocating all villages to sites under direct army control and destroying those villages; (c) using the relocated villagers and others as forced labor for portering and building military access roads into their home areas; (d) moving in more Army units in and use the villagers as forced labor to build bases along the access roads; (e) allowing the villagers back to their villages, when they were now under complete military control and can be used as a rotating source of extortion money and forced labor, further consolidating control through "development" projects, forced labor farming for the army, etc. If resistance attacks still persist at this last stage, retaliation is carried out against villages by executing village elders, burning houses and other means.

Throughout Burma this process is at various stages; in eastern Tenasserim Division the SPDC is still on military offensive, while in parts of Chin State it is conducting initial forced relocations, and in central Shan State it is combining the two. In parts of central Karen State, which the SLORC/SPDC has now occupied for three years, the SPDC is constructing access roads and new Army bases with forced labor. In areas which the junta has controlled for longer periods and those where there has never been active resistance, the process is well into its last stage of systematic forced labor and economic exploitation of the local population.

Many villages now being burned by SPDC troops were first burned in 1975 when the "Four Cuts" were first implemented, and some villagers speak of having been on the

run from Burmese troops since 1975; but even these villagers say that in the past three years things have grown much worse. The direct attacks on the civilian population, characterized by mass forced relocations, destruction of villages and the village economy, and completely unsustainable levels of forced labor, have now become the central pillar of SPDC policy in ethnic rural areas of Burma. In the past, the regime would strategically destroy two or three villages at a time when there was resistance. For the last three years, the SPDC has perceived a possibility of armed resistance; it has delineated an entire geographic region and forcibly relocated and destroyed every village there is, as many as hundreds of villages at a time. In many cases, these villages have had little or no contact with resistance forces and do not even understand why they are being targeted.

Every army camp demands money from every village in its area, and usually this is calculated to amount to all the money a village can raise each month. With the arrival of new army camps, the amount increases proportionately. In 1995 the Karen Human Rights Group studied a group of 28 villages averaging 50 families in size and found that each village was paying an average of approximately 100,000 *kyat* per month to local army battalions just in established cash fees, not including extra fees to avoid forced labour, ad hoc extortion demands or forced contribution of food and other material goods. Ten thousand *kyat* is US\$15,000 at the official exchange rate or US\$350 at market rate, but for a subsistence farming community it is a very large amount of money. This sum continues to increase because of the constant expansion of the number of Army camps near every village. Just looking at this amount and considering the number of villages in Burma, it appears that at least 1 to 2 billion *kyat* per month is being extorted from rural villagers by SPDC field military officers, and this does not even include other sums which these officers make by selling rations and village goods, or by stealing the wages of their soldiers. These officers have no expenses while in the field. They remit a portion of their profits to higher-level officers and send the remainder to their families, most of whom live in Rangoon, Mandalay or other large towns. Their families can then use these billions of *kyat* flowing into the towns as seed money to start businesses, and it is these businesses which lead to the false impression of “economic growth” in the cities. In fact, all of the “growth” in the cities is financed by this steady flow of money and goods robbed from rural villagers, combined with the laundered profits of the narcotics trade.

The SPDC is systematically stripping rural Burma of all it can produce in order to finance a façade of economic improvement in the cities, while at the same time destroying the food production capabilities of most non-Burman ethnic areas. Even rural villages which have never been burned or forcibly relocated cannot sustain this system. Having to do so much forced labor that they no longer have enough time to farm, to hand over crop quotas which are often more than they can grow and cash which is more than they could ever normally obtain, and always facing the additional looting by SPDC soldiers, many villagers can only survive by selling off their livestock and valuables. When those are gone or when another Army camp comes to their area, they have no choice but to flee or face arrest. Many end up as beggars in the towns, internally displaced people in the forests, or “economic migrants” and refugees in neighboring countries. Over 80 per cent of Burma’s population live in rural villages, but the SPDC is looting the countryside until the village is no longer viable as a social unit. This is the key factor causing Burma’s current economic crisis. The SPDC apparently hopes to keep operating this unsustainable system, propping

it up with money from foreign investment and aid. This explains its current attempts to attract investment and aid money. However, without political or policy changes, any outside support will only prop up an unsustainable system and ensure a greater disaster in the future.

62 Situation of farmers in Burma

National multi-cropping programs were first implemented throughout Burma in 1992. It has aimed both to clear and cultivate additional fields, and to increase yields from established farms. To boost productivity, farmers throughout the country have been ordered to increase the number of crops planted a year, from one to two, and in some areas, even three crops. In many areas, salinity problems, high flood risks, and seasonal pest problems made multiple cropping inappropriate. It was nevertheless imposed on villages, with sometimes disastrous results, by regional and local military authorities who had production targets to meet. This order promises to increase their production, while costing farmers significantly in additional labor, irrigation fees and fertilizer.

Another kind of system imposed on the farmers in Burma is the paddy quota system. Which requires all farmers to sell a number of baskets per harvest to the SPDC at their set prices which is usually only 20-25 percent of market value. Paddy quotas set by the SPDC appear to be slightly different from one area in the country to the other, probably based on types of cultivated soil, and also from one year to the next. Some farmers from Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division, said they had to sell eight baskets per acre to the SPDC in the 1996-97 paddy tax year. However, during the same year, farmers from Thayet Chaung township, Tenasserim Division, and some from Irrawaddy Division, said they then had to sell 12 baskets per acre. The paddy tax rate was generally 12 baskets per acre up to the 1997-98 paddy tax year. The paddy quota is in effect a nationwide tax on farmers, the goal of which is to provide the SPDC with cheap rice to supply the military and civil servants. The SPDC provides farmers with some cash assistance to cover cultivation costs, but in many cases any benefits are eliminated by the fact that support is linked directly to Burma's paddy quota tax. Any farmers who cannot sell the tax paddy in full to the SPDC are normally subjected to arrest, torture and detention. They are not released unless they are able to fulfill their quota of paddy to the authorities. This is to say when a farmer does not obtain an adequate amount of paddy from his paddy fields, he or she must then purchase more paddy from the market so that he or she can sell to the authorities the full amount as required. In many places in Burma, farmers have to mortgage or sell off their own farmland or cattle to be able to pay the paddy tax as required.

In December 1997, the SPDC officially announced in the media that it will not buy or take yearly paddy tax from farmers. That meant the farmers could freely sell in the markets or to merchants at whatever price they liked. However, in reality, the SPDC authorities instructed the local authorities in the whole country to resume taking yearly paddy tax. Following the instruction, Mon State PDC authorities and military personnel have constantly forced the farmers in Mon State to sell their paddy at a price set by the authorities.

The government set price for any kind of paddy is about 350 *kyat* per basket, and the authorities instructed the local authorities in Mon State to appoint a paddy-purchasing

committee and set up paddy purchasing centers in the whole state. Paddy-purchasing committees were responsible for receiving full amounts of paddy set by the authorities. These committees aimed to exert pressure on the farmers to sell set amounts of paddy to the respective and nearest paddy-purchasing centers in time, or to take paddy from the farmers' houses by force with cooperation from the local military battalion if the farmers failed to sell the set amount. These committees could treat the farmers as they liked if they could not get set amount of paddy from them. They always issued warning orders to the farmers to be sure they sold their quota of paddy to the centers, and if the farmers did not bring their paddy to the centers, they could use force. In many cases, these committees collaborated with the military or the police, forcibly confiscating farmers' belongings when the farmers were not able to sell their quota of paddy to the authorities. The following are the some of the examples of extrajudicial actions by the paddy-purchasing committees in Mon State. Similar reports come from other parts of Burma.

On February 4, 1998, township paddy-purchasing officials U Pe Kyi, U Tin Win, U Aung Ba Ye and 10 armed soldiers from LIB 209 went into Kamawet village, Mudon township, broke paddy stores of three farmers and looted all the paddy from the stores for allegedly failing to sell their quota of paddy. The amount looted from the three farmers was more than the amount they were required to sell to the authorities, but the authorities did not give any payment.

On February 14, 1998, Kalort-tort village track paddy-purchasing committee members and a commander from LIB 209 went to Thaungpa village, Mudon township, Mon State, and looted about 500 baskets of paddy from farmers without payment. On February 18, 1998, the same group went into the village and asked 40,000 *kyat* from six farmers, also taking two oxen from two farmers who failed to sell paddy. The group told the two farmers to pay a ransom of 8,000 *kyat* per ox if they wanted their cattle back.

On April 3, 1998, paddy-purchasing officers and militia groups went to Tagundaing village, Mudon township, Mon State, and tried to loot paddy from the farmers. After they were not able to get the set amount of paddy, the group demanded a ransom of 200,000 *kyat* from the farmers who were unable to sell the full amount of paddy sought by the authorities. They said they would buy paddy with their cash to substitute for the paddy that the farmers were required to sell to the paddy-purchasing center. Seven farmers, namely Nai Tun Tin, Nai Haling Lon, Mi Than Shin, Nai Soe, Nai Aung Thwin, Nai Tun Chain and Mi Ngwe Kyin had to pay the ransom.

While the SPDC authorities paid 350 *kyat* per basket, the price in the markets was about 600-700 *kyat* per basket. Since January 17, 1998, Mudon township authorities had started to purchase paddy from farmers and set a quota of 12 baskets per acre for every farmer in the region. There were 11 centers in Mudon township, Mon State, and 850,000 baskets of paddy were required for purchasing. Similarly, in Thanbyuzayut, Chaungzone and Ye townships in Mon State, the SPDC authorities set up centers to purchase paddy from the farmers and estimated 450,000 – 500,000 baskets of paddy were required to be purchased. (**Source: HURFOM**)

The SPDC is also increasingly placing restrictions on the kinds of crops grown by the local farmers, forcing them to grow crops for the troops which they will either consume themselves or sell.

6.3. Unfair Levies and Taxes

The entire population of Burma, particularly rural people, is normally subjected to innumerable “taxes” or “fees” of both the official and unofficial kinds, predominantly levied by local authorities civil and military besides the “monthly” and “emergency portering” taxes and fees. Taxes and fees of the official kind are levied by the authorities under the guise of providing necessary support to officially-sanctioned “community work” on government sites. In the levying of these “official” taxes and fees, it is commonplace that local SLORC/SPDC authorities also levy their own, “unofficial” fees for private benefit.

Even the middle-class merchants, who make up just a small fraction of the rural population, are barely able to meet the demands for taxes and fees. Consequently, the poverty-stricken rural majority experience unparalleled hardship under the constant and heavy burden of all these “official” and “unofficial” taxes and fees. Such people are forced to obey any order given to them by the local military and civil authorities and are forced to comply with any demand made by them. Whenever local SLORC/SPDC or SPDC authorities- whether they be civil or military- make demands for the contribution of labor, this population has no choice but to accede to these such demands, regardless of whether they are reasonably able to spare time and money. Rampant corruption among government officials and civil servants, and the traditional misuse of their authority, have doubled the burdens of the rural population and have increased their suffering.

6.3.1 Labor Taxes

Where the authorities use forced labor on state-sanctioned infrastructure or development projects, we find an additional range of taxes and fines that are often imposed in the name of substituted labor-hiring fees or donations. Such “donations” are forcibly collected from those towns, villages and households that cannot perform or contribute labor. Most if not all of this extorted money is just stolen from forced laborers by local SPDC civil and military personnel, who are entrusted with the implementation of projects and with the supervision of forced labor camps. None of the forced laborers working on the many infrastructure or development projects in and around Burma have been officially recruited or paid by the responsible authorities.

6.3.2 Porter Taxes

The SPDC-controlled military normally levies a porter tax of both a “regular” and “emergency” kind from the rural population, which constitutes at least two thirds of the entire population of Burma. This rural population, especially in ethnic nationality or non-Burman regions, has been far more seriously affected by such policies of extortion than before. A “porter” fee or tax is not a tax paid by a porter, but a tax paid in lieu of actually becoming a porter. On those rare occasions, civilians are given the freedom to choose. In theory, individuals, households or villages must pay a regular “monthly” and “emergency portering” tax merely to remain free from having themselves conscripted into the military as porters. In practice, however, mere payment of all these “monthly” and “emergency

portering” taxes does not mean that people remain free from portering or associated military abuse.

Members of the SPDC army, especially those controlling rural areas, normally incur a great deal of private benefit by levying these taxes on the local population. Such taxes can vary from as little as 500 *kyat* per household per month to as much as 3,000 *kyat* or more. (*Source: MIS*)

64. Situation in Northern Pa-an District, Karen State

An SPDC campaign to destroy Karen villages in northern Pa-an district has already led to the displacement of several thousand villagers, and over 3,000 of these villagers have crossed the border into Thailand. The area they are fleeing is on the eastern slopes of the Dawna Range close to the Thai border, part of Dta Greh township (Dta Greh is called Pain Kyone in Burmese, and the SPDC considers it part of Hlaing Bwe township).

Sixty to 100 km (40-60 miles) further south in Myawaddy and Kawkareik townships, many villagers have been fleeing their villages because of being forced to serve as human mine detonators and these existed a threat to relocate their villages at harvest time in late 1998. However, in Dta Greh township the campaign to forcibly relocate or destroy the villages already began in August and is now in full swing. There has been sporadic fighting between the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and SPDC units in the area, and more intense fighting around the KNLA 7th Brigade headquarters further south. It appears that the SPDC has now resorted to its standard military strategy of destroying all villages in areas of perceived resistance.

In August approximately 1,500 villagers from the affected area fled across the border to Noh Bo in Thailand, and in September another 1,665 refugees crossed into Thailand in the Mae U Su area. The September refugees came from the villages of Tee Gker Haw, Wah Mi Klah, B’Nweh Pu, Po Paw Lay, Meh Lah Ah Hta, Meh Lah Ah Kee, Meh Keh, and Klay Po Kloh. Refugees are also reported to have come from Po Ti Pwa, Ma Oh Pu, and Tha Pwih Hser villages. As yet the total number of villages affected by the campaign is unclear.

In September SPDC troops, reportedly from LIB 44, formed three columns of approximately 100 soldiers each and went separate ways to destroy villages. Villagers from Meh Keh testify that the SPDC column positioned itself on a hill outside the village and fired several mortar shells into the village without warning, causing all the villagers to flee. The troops then entered the village, looted the houses, killed and ate the livestock, and burned down the houses and paddy storage barns. Testimony from other villages agrees that this is the pattern being used by the SPDC troops. Villagers confirm that at least four villages have been completely destroyed in this way: in Meh Keh 27 houses were burned down, in Meh La Ah Uta 24 houses were burned, and the villages of Tha Pwih Hser and Bo Toh Pwah were also completely destroyed. One house from B’Nweh Pu village was destroyed, as well as varying numbers of houses in other villages.

However, most villagers who have fled the area say that their villages never received any orders to leave, but were simply attacked without warning. The only news they had heard was word from local KNLA troops that SPDC columns were heading for their villages and might make trouble. In Tee Gker Haw village, soldiers of the Democratic Karen Buddhist

Army came to the village first and told the villagers, "Just stay here and don't run away." The villagers stayed, but when the SPDC column arrived they immediately began looting houses and shooting livestock. Most of the villagers ran off, and those who were caught by the SPDC column were taken away as porters. The village was thoroughly looted but was not burned. The villagers reported that there were 10 or more DKBA soldiers with each of the SPDC columns, probably fulfilling their usual role as guides and giving information about hidden food supplies and likely hiding places of the villagers.

Those who have fled report that most of the villages in the area are now abandoned; even those which have not yet been attacked have been abandoned out of fear. Only a few people remain in some of the villages which have not been destroyed, mainly the elderly or others physically incapable of fleeing to the hills. Many villagers remain internally displaced high in the hills. There are many landmines in the area which have been laid by all sides - the KNLA, DKBA and SPDC. Several villagers have already been seriously wounded by these mines while fleeing. One woman who had her leg blown off has been evacuated to Mae Sot hospital in Thailand.

KNLA units are active as guerrillas in the area, but there is no regular or heavy fighting. The villagers report that the SPDC columns are still around their villages, and believe that they are planning to establish a new Army camp in the area. There are already two existing SPDC Army camps near Meh Lah Ah, at Kyih Lay Kyo and Wah Bway Kyo. The villagers say that in the past, SPDC troops at these camps did not try to destroy their villages but raided regularly to capture porters and loot food. This time, most villagers fled their villages to avoid being captured as porters, not realizing their villages were to be destroyed. The villagers say they have no idea why the SPDC has suddenly decided to destroy their villages.

65. Situation of Southern Pa-an district, Karen State

The region commonly known as Pa-an District forms a large triangular area in central Karen State, bounded in the west and north by the Salween River and the town of Pa-an (capital of Karen State), bounded in the east by the Moei River where it forms the border with Thailand, and in the south by the motor road from Myawaddy (at the Thai border) westward to Kawkareik and Kyone Doh. Pa-an District is also known as the Karen National Liberation Army's (KNLA) 7th brigade area. The western parts of Pa-an district and the principal towns have been controlled by the SPDC military junta for 10 years or longer, while the eastern strip adjacent to the Thai border has come largely under their control over the past three years. The easternmost strip of Pa-an district near the Moei River is separated from the rest of the district by the main ridge of the steep Dawna Mountains.

The KNLA still has extensive operations east of the Dawna and in the mountains itself, while the plains further west are primarily controlled by the SPDC and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA). On both sides of the Dawna range there has been continuous low intensity fighting, as well as some larger battles, between the KNLA and the combined forces of the SPDC and DKBA, and this fighting has intensified over the past year. Some villages were previously forced to move by the SPDC in retaliation for this fighting, but in most cases the SPDC battalions realized that without the villagers to use as a shield and as

forced labor they were only more vulnerable to attack, so the villagers were gradually allowed or ordered to return home. Until recently most villagers were somehow managing to survive in the area. However, in the middle of 1998, there was a sudden flight of villagers in southern Pa-an District. Most have fled into the forests to become internally displaced, while some have fled to the Thai border. At this stage it is difficult to estimate numbers, but it appears that 5-10,000 villagers are affected, and several hundred of these have already arrived at the Thai border.

There are several reasons for this sudden flight. The first of these is a general increase in forced labor for SPDC and DKBA troops in the area. This includes forced labor building and maintaining army camps and roads, as sentries and messengers, and as porters to support both SPDC and DKBA troops patrolling and fighting the KNLA in the region. The villagers have had to do this kind of labor before to a lesser extent, but what is terrifying many of them into fleeing is that they are increasingly being used as human minesweepers during their forced labor as porters.

Landmines are being used extensively throughout the area by all parties to the conflict, the SPDC, the DKBA, and the KNLA. The KNLA generally lays its mines slightly off the pathways and notifies local villagers of which routes are mined, but the SPDC and DKBA lay mines indiscriminately on pathways, around farm fields and in abandoned villages without notifying anyone. Villagers' cattle are regularly killed by these mines. When a villager's cow steps on an SPDC mine, the owner must keep quiet because if the SPDC finds the owner he is fined "to pay the cost of the landmine." Villagers in the area are more and more frequently being maimed or killed by these mines; due to the difficulty of getting medical help, most of those who step on the mines die. Now the combined SPDC/DKBA columns in the area are sending their forced labor porters out in front of the column to detonate mines, and in many cases are specifically rounding up women in villages to march in front of columns and act as human mine detonators. Even if the villagers know which paths have been mined by the KNLA they do not know the precise locations of the mines, and if they do or say anything which indicates they know the route is mined, then the SPDC troops will accuse them of being KNLA collaborators and torture or execute them. Villagers from Taw Oak village report that at least six people from their small village died in the past year from landmines, particularly from being forced to act as human mine detonators. In Sgaw Ko village, a few months ago an SPDC patrol demanded that a group of women from the village go with one of their patrols to detonate mines, but the village headman would not allow it but instead he went in their place. He was killed by stepping on a landmine. Fear of being killed by landmines is giving villagers no choice but to flee their villages to avoid forced portering and above all being required to act as human minesweepers.

Another reason causing people to flee is an increase in looting and extortion, particularly by SPDC and DKBA troops. For some time now DKBA troops have lost their material support from the SPDC and have been forced to live off the villagers, and now SPDC troops throughout Burma are receiving rations only sporadically, in some areas not at all. This has led to a general increase in the looting of villagers' rice, livestock and belongings, demands for money, and forced labor on projects to grow food and make money for army units. People in some villages have been forced to hand over one bullock cart and a bullock team per family to the army, a very expensive demand if they do not have a cart. Earlier this year, the DKBA held a meeting and said that they would build a new office in

Myawaddy town. They ordered all villages to cut logs and undertake forced labor building the office or pay 3,000 *kyat* per family. SPDC officers notified villagers in Pah Klu village that every family would have to pay 700 *kyat* per month in extortion money for the next year. This came at a time when villagers had already sold all their belongings to pay previous demands and were suffering a bad year for their rice crop because of the lack of rain early in the growing season. At the same time, they had to continue handing over rice to KNLA units in the area. They were just not capable of supplying all sides at once.

Many villages in the area already have a curfew of 4 p.m. imposed by the SPDC; they are only allowed to go to their fields in the morning with only enough rice for their lunch, and they must be back in the village by 4 p.m. (or by sunset in some villages) or they will be arrested and beaten or tortured, or shot on sight if seen outside the village. For many villagers whose fields are far from the village, this is making it impossible for them to grow a proper crop. At this time of the year they would normally live in their field huts to tend their fields and drive off wild pigs and other animals.

The reason likely to cause the vast majority of the villagers to flee over the next several months is forced relocation. Some villages have already been forced to relocate to Ker Ghaw, where there is a significant DKBA presence, and in late 1998 the DKBA told village elders from Taw Oak, Pah Klu, Sgaw Ko, Kwih Lay and the entire Meh Pleh Toh area that all villages in this region would be forced to relocate after the rainy season, as soon as the harvest was completed (i.e. about December). They were told that they would be allowed to move to a designated army-controlled relocation site or to any garrison town where they might have relatives, but that if they stayed in their home area “you will be targets for our guns.”

66. Situation in Taungoo District, Pegu Division

Taungoo district (named Taw Oo in Karen) forms the northern tip of Karen State, sandwiched between Karenni State to the east, Shan State to the north, and Pegu Division to the west. The vast majority of villagers in this region are Karen. Many live in small villages which are difficult to reach in the very steep and forested hills covering most of the district. Further west, the hills taper off into the gentler terrain of the Sittaung River valley near Taungoo town.

In the east of the district, the SPDC has steadily increased its troop presence in this previously inaccessible area over the past two or three years. Several villages in the region were destroyed to force the people to move to SPDC-controlled areas, and villagers throughout the hills of Tantabin (Taw Ta Tu) township were forced to build a road from Baw Ga Li Gyi (Kler Lah) to Bu Sah Kee, opening up much of southeastern Taungoo district to the SPDC army. Several army camps were subsequently established along this road, at Kaw Thay Der, Naw Soe, Si Kheh Der and Bu Sah Kee. The new road is not passable during rainy season, so villagers have to perform forced labor as porters carrying supplies to and from all of these army camps. Then they have to do forced labor rebuilding the road after every rainy season. They also face regular demands to supply labor to the army, and suffer from regular looting and extortion of money.

As in other areas, SPDC forces try to undermine KNLA activities by targeting the villagers. Most villages which do not have an SPDC camp and are not along motor roads

have been ordered to relocate; more than 10 villages have been ordered to move to Baw Ga Li Gyi (Kler Lah) alone since the beginning of 1998. Rather than move as ordered, most people still stay in their villages or the surrounding forests, dodging the SPDC patrols which come through the area. Those who moved as ordered were provided with nothing at the relocation sites and could only build small bamboo huts in which to live. Unable to farm or earn a living and with no support, many of them have fled back to the forests around their villages. People found hiding in areas around the outlying villages, and villages which are perceived as uncooperative, have been treated brutally. Villagers found in their fields in outlying areas are either grabbed to become porters, shot dead or robbed on the spot.

Larger villages along the motor roads, such as Kler Lah (Baw Ga Li Gyi), Kaw Thay Der (Yay Tho Gyi) and Naw Soe, are under tight SPDC control and have army bases adjacent to the village. These villages are known as Nyein Chan Yay (“Peace”) villages, in reference to an informal agreement existing between the village elders and the local military that they will cooperate with all SPDC demands and in return will not be forced to relocate or have their houses burned. The leaders of these villages receive constant demands for “porter fees” and other forms of monetary extortion, food and materials. The Army also sends regular demands for porters, and to avoid sending people on long-term frontline portering duty the villagers have to pool their money and pay labor agents to hire itinerant laborers from Toungoo town to fill the army’s demands. However, even after paying all this money the villagers regularly have to carry army rations to outlying camps; women often do this forced labor because the men fear that they will be held for several months if they go. The villages also have to provide rotating forced laborers for army camp labor and to act as messengers. All vehicles transporting goods or passengers to and from Toungoo have to pay bribes to all of the SPDC checkpoints along the way. This causes the price of rice to be 1,000 *kyat* more per sack in Kler Lah than it is in Toungoo, and has also led to a shortage of transport, because some drivers have left to find work elsewhere. Villages which are slow in complying with demands for money and forced labor are threatened with having their people and vehicles prohibited from travelling to Toungoo, or with having their homes burned, despite their designation as “Peace” villages.

People in the “Peace” villages have also had to perform forced labor clearing the route for a new road from Toungoo to Mawchee, over 100 km to the southeast in southern Karenni State. Much of the actual road construction is being done with bulldozers, but villagers have been forced to do all the initial clearing of the road route by hand. Many farmers with fields along the route could not plant a crop in 1998 for fear of being taken for additional forced labor by the soldiers along the road. Construction is still continuing and is far from complete, and there have been reports that construction is also ongoing from the Mawchee end of the road using the forced labor of Karenni villagers.

The SPDC is currently intensifying its clampdown on the outlying areas of the district, and this results in even further restrictions on the “Peace” villages. Even sleeping away from one’s house at night can result in arrest for “contact with insurgents.” In the brown areas of Taungoo District, the “appropriate action” taken against such people usually means execution, or at the very least prolonged detention under torture. The prohibition against sleeping in field huts makes life very difficult for villagers in the cropping season, especially those whose fields are a significant distance from the village. The restrictions on

travel to Taungoo make it very difficult for traders to bring any goods into the area or for villagers to shop for required items in town. In practice, this restriction is used to extort money from traders before allowing them to travel and to “tax” everything they transport. In addition, there are at least six army checkpoints along the road from Baw Ga Li Gyi (Kler Lah) to Taungoo, and every checkpoint demands money or goods from passing drivers. Villagers in the area complain that, as with Kler Lah previously mentioned, this causes rice to cost 1,000 *kyat* more per sack in Baw Ga Li Gyi than it does in Toungoo; instead of 2,000 *kyat* per 50-kilogram sack it costs 3,000 *kyat*, a 33 percent increase. Other goods have similar mark-ups in their prices. Even in Toungoo the prices are already soaring due to commodity shortages in Burma, making this mark-up even harder to bear. To make matters worse, the few vehicles in the villages are often commandeered by the military or banned from travelling on the road whenever there are military operations ongoing, and whenever a village fails to send money or forced laborers as demanded; one of the most frequently used punishments is to ban the people and vehicles of the village from travelling. There are very few vehicles in the villages to begin with, but some of the vehicle owners have already moved to the plains because they can no longer face all these restrictions and pay all the extortionate fees required to transport people and goods to and from Baw Ga Li Gyi.

In Baw Ga Li Gyi (Kler Lah) village tract a complex system has developed of forced labor, fees to hire substitutes for forced labor, and “porter fees,” which is simply extortion money paid to the army with the understanding that failure to pay is punishable by arrest and an indefinite term of forced labor. This village tract is a group of over ten villages administered by the Village Tract PDC in Baw Ga Li Gyi, a large village of several hundred households. The Village Tract PDC is clearly working closely with the local SPDC battalions; the PDC officials receive orders from the battalions, then pass them on to the elders of all villages under their administration, sometimes with extra demands tacked on to enrich themselves. Initially the local battalions issue orders to the Village Tract PDC demanding numbers of forced laborers for a specific purpose. Knowing that the villages do not want to provide the labor and will be slow to comply, the Village Tract PDC often hires day laborers through agents in Toungoo, pays for their “car fees” (i.e. transport costs) to Baw Ga Li Gyi, and supplies them to the SPDC military. The Village Tract PDC then issues orders to the villages under their administration to pay their share of the cost based on the relative size (determined by the number of households) of their village; for example, a village may be ordered to pay for 10 of the 80 people hired by the Village Tract PDC. The amount is usually 4,000 *kyat* for each short-term porter plus 250 *kyat* for his “car fee”. At any given time there are well over 100 people doing forced labor assignments for the army camps in this village tract alone, and this only includes the regular monthly demands for rotating laborers.

Under this system even small villages must pay 30,000-80,000 *kyat* per month, and many simply do not have the money to do so because of all the other SPDC demands they have to meet. As a result, most villages fall behind in their payments, and once payments fall behind by a couple of months the Village Tract PDC often tells the village “we will no longer take any responsibility for you” and reports the village to the military for the inhabitants’ failure to “perform their duty”. A military column might then storm the village to loot and burn houses as punishment.

In addition to these fees, villages must give money directly to the military under the name of “porter fees” and other “fees” whenever they are arbitrarily demanded. Soldiers from the camps on the outskirts of the villages regularly wander into the villages and demand or steal livestock, food, valuables and money. Army camps send written demands for rice, meat, vegetables, fruits, cheroots, condiments, and building supplies such as bamboo and roofing leaves. When livestock is taken, the village head often collects money from all the villagers in order to reimburse the owner; in this way the heavy cost is distributed more tolerably among the villagers. Livestock is taken so often that some villages have a regular contribution system for this, with each family having to contribute a certain amount after each visit by the troops, the amount set by the village head depending on how much livestock has been stolen. One villager reported that in Taw Ma Aye village in the “white” area among the Sittaung River, those who cannot pay this contribution are ordered by the village head to take rotations of forced labor more often than other villagers.

In some areas the people are still staying in their villages, but flee to the forests whenever they hear of a SPDC patrol coming close. Many do not even dare stay in their villages, especially if their homes have already been burned. They stay in small groups in their farm-field huts or in the forest near their village. These people also watch out for any sign of SPDC patrols coming, and flee further into the hills when necessary. When the patrols come they pass through villages, loot whatever valuables they find, and sometimes burn houses if there are signs of habitation. They seek out the shelters of villagers in hiding and burn any they find. They also look for the rice supplies which villagers hide in paddy storage barns deep in the forest; when they find these, they take whatever they can and force their porters to carry them, then burn or destroy what remains. Villagers report that in some cases they have simply set the forest on fire, possibly to burn out those in hiding or their food supplies, and that these fires have spread to betel-nut and cardamom plantations and destroyed them.

Many people in the area are surviving by continuing to tend their gardens of cardamom peanuts and their betel-nut plantations. They then take these cash crops to the “Peace” villages, where they can sell them for money and buy rice to carry back into the forest with them. It is an extremely difficult and dangerous way to survive. Whenever SPDC patrols come close, they have to flee and can lose their crop, and as a result many people do not have the money required to buy rice to survive. Even if they can get a crop, if there are too many SPDC troops along the paths to the “Peace” villages, then they dare not go for fear of capture. If they make it to the “Peace” villages they are at great risk. As mentioned above, people in these villages are kept under tight restrictions and family lists are regularly checked; if the army finds out that villagers have come from outlying areas, they will be arrested.

6.7. Situation in Nyaunglebin District, Pegu Division

Nyaunglebin (known in Karen as Kler Lwe Htoo) district is a northern Karen region straddling the border of northern Karen State and Pegu Division. It contains the northern reaches of the Bilin (Bu Loh Kloh) River northwest of Papun, and stretches westward as far as the Sittaung (Sittang) River in the area 60 to 150 km north of Pegu (named Bago by the SPDC). The district has three townships: Ler Doh (Kyaukyi in Burmese), Hsaw Tee

(Shwegyin), and Mone. The eastern two-thirds of the district is covered by forested hills dotted with small Karen villages, and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) operates extensively in this region. The western part of the district is in the plains of the Sittaung River basin; here there are larger villages of mixed Karen and Burman population, and this area is under strong SPDC control. For several years now SPDC forces have tried to destroy Karen resistance in the eastern hills, largely by forcing villagers to move and wiping out their ability to produce food. Many villages in the parts of these eastern hills bordering Papun District have been destroyed since 1997 as part of the SPDC campaign to wipe out Karen villages in northern Papun and eastern Nyaunglebin districts.

Finding itself unable to suppress Karen resistance activity in the eastern hills of Nyaunglebin district, early in 1997 the SPDC began a campaign to wipe out all Karen civilian villages in the hills. Where villagers could be found, they were ordered to relocate westward into the plains; where they could not be caught, their villages were shelled without warning, looted and then burned to the ground, while villagers found afterwards were shot on sight. Most villagers fled into the hills to live in hiding in small groups of families while trying to grow small patches of rice, and many others moved westward as ordered into the plains, either to stay with relatives or to garrison villages along the main roads as the SPDC troops had demanded.

Many of the people who moved into the plains have now fled back into the hills. They say that they returned to the hills because they could not survive in the plains; they had no land to plant, there was no paid labour to survive on, and they could not face all the demands for forced labour and money from the SPDC troops. Some had died because they were not used to the water and the illnesses in the plains. Even though they knew their villages had been destroyed, that they would have to live in hiding and that they would be shot if found by SPDC patrols they still returned. Now they join the thousands of Karen villagers who have lived internally displaced in these hills since 1997.

In the hills the villagers are hiding in small groups of a few families in high valleys and other remote places. Apart from trying to grow small patches of rice, they have little or nothing to eat; most meals consist of a small amount of rice or thin rice gruel, combined with salt or chillies if they are lucky enough to have these, and some forest leaves or sour cucumber soup (which just consists of cucumber boiled in water with a bit of salt; cucumbers are grown among the rice in hill fields). As in many other areas, much of the already small rice crop was destroyed recently by the lack of rains early in the season and the plague of insects brought on by the drought.

SPDC patrols come through the hills as often as two or three times per month, burn any rice storage barns they find, shoot at villagers they see in the fields or the forests, and burn any shelters they find. When they find belongings they loot them and destroy whatever they do not want or cannot carry, even smashing the bottoms out of cooking pans. From September to November 1998, before the rice was ready to harvest, SPDC patrols went through many of the hillside rice fields they found pulling up the paddy plants by the roots, stomping them down with their boots or cutting them with machetes and scattering the grains on the ground.

The displaced villagers are always fleeing from one place to another to avoid the patrols. Some villagers say they will not build a proper shelter with a raised floor until the rainy season, because in the dry season the SPDC patrols are almost certain to find and

burn it. They have no change of clothing and few or no blankets, and have to sleep around fires in temperatures which can drop to 10 degrees Celsius or lower in the cool season. They have no medicines and speak of treating gunshot wounds by applying sesame oil after repeating incantations. These villagers dare not go down into the plains for fear of arrest as “insurgents”, and it is difficult or impossible for most of them to get to Thailand because they would have to pass through all of northern Papun district, where SPDC troops have destroyed even more villages and are patrolling to shoot villagers on sight. However, a small group of just over 100 refugees managed to make this difficult journey with the help of the KNLA and arrived in Ban Sala refugee camp in Thailand on January 10, 1999. Many of these were from Ler Wah and Tee Mu Hta villages of Ler Doh township, both of which were shelled and burned by SPDC troops in November 1998. The troops also shot at the villagers and burned the entire rice supplies of many families in these villages, giving them little option but to flee to Thailand.

6.8 Situation in Papun district, Karen State

Papun (Mudraw) district is bounded by Nyaunglebin district in the northwest, Thaton district in the southwest, and the Salween River and Thailand to the east. Over 100 villages in northern Papun District have been systematically shelled, burned and destroyed since 1997 by SPDC troops trying to eradicate support for Karen resistance in the region. About 100 of these were ordered to move, but many of the villages never saw the order because the villagers always flee when SPDC troops approach. In response, the SPDC launched a campaign simply to destroy all villages without warning.

The situation in northern Papun district remains very similar to what it was earlier in the year. Most villages have already been completely burned and destroyed, but SPDC patrols continue going through the area to burn any trace of villages which still remain, destroy food supplies, and the shelters of villagers who are hiding in the forest. These patrols have reportedly mined and booby-trapped the burned remains of some villages, because they know that villagers are in hiding nearby and that they frequently return to scavenge for food, belongings and materials in the burned ruins of their villages. Villagers sighted in the region are sometimes taken as porters, but are more frequently shot or otherwise executed on sight. In Lu Thaw township, at least two more villagers were executed on sight in September. The vast majority of villagers are living in small clusters of shelters and hiding deep in the forests and high in the hills, trying to reach their old hillside rice fields or to clear small new ones in the hills. These fields have not yielded much, especially with the lack of rain this past rainy season. In September, SPDC patrols were sent through Lu Thaw township to destroy rice crops where possible, and much of the crop was cut down with machetes or stomped on by the troops. Villagers in hiding in the forest are living primarily on roots and jungle leaves. Even in areas where SPDC troops seldom arrive, such as the Day Pu Noh area, there is almost no rice available and villagers are surviving on rice soup, sharing around whatever rice they can find or buy from town. Although villagers in this region are much closer to Thailand than in the other districts, most of them do not want to go because of their very close attachment to their land, their extreme fear of landmines and SPDC troops along the escape routes, and their fear of abuse and forced repatriation by Thai troops who they know may await them on arrival at the border.

6.9. Situation in Thaton district, Mon State

Thaton (Doothatu) district straddles the border of Karen State and northern Mon State. Being close to the coastal road and railway lines, this district is under quite heavy SPDC control, and the DKBA also has a significant presence in the eastern parts of the district. Only small Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) units can operate in the area, so while there is sporadic fighting in the area the villages there have not been systematically destroyed in retaliation. Several Karen villages near the Belin and Donthami rivers were forced to relocate to larger villages in 1997. Some of the people from the villages in the Donthami area are now reportedly trickling back to try living in their old villages or the surrounding forests. It is as yet unclear whether SPDC and DKBA troops will allow this to continue.

When fighting occurs, the normal response by SPDC troops is to detain and torture local village elders. This is accompanied in the area by fairly regular and systematic looting, demands for money and forced laborers as porters and at army camps. The future of villagers in this area will largely depend on the degree of activity conducted by the KNLA; assuming that the KNLA continues to operate there, it is likely that the SPDC will eventually clamp down further on the villagers by conducting further forced relocations.

6.10. Situation in Shan State

In central Shan State, the SPDC has destroyed over 1,400 villages since 1996, making over 300,000 people homeless. The campaign began by relocating and destroying about 400 villages in an attempt to undermine the Shan United Revolutionary Army (SURA). Villagers were given three to seven days to move to army-controlled sites, after which many of their homes were burned and anyone seen in their villages was shot on sight. When this operation failed to have any effect on the SURA, the SPDC expanded the relocation area and also forced many of those already relocated to move again, to even more crowded and tightly controlled sites. By early 1998 this forced relocation campaign had expanded to cover all the villages in an area of 7,000 square miles, totaling over 1,400 villages, and the area is still being expanded despite the fact that many of these villages have never had any contact with Shan opposition groups. The SURA has now joined with other groups to form the Shan State Army (SSA) and is seeking negotiations with the SPDC, but the junta has refused negotiations and vows to crush the Shan groups. The villagers are starving in the relocation sites, where the SPDC gives them nothing and uses them as forced labor building army camps and an air base, and maintaining and guarding roads into the area. Many villagers can be seen begging for food along these roads, while many others have been shot on sight or massacred by SPDC troops because they try to return to their villages to find food. An estimated 80,000-100,000 refugees from the region have already fled to Thailand and more continue to do so, but there are no Shan refugee camps in Thailand so they have no option but to enter the illegal workforce, ending up as cheap labor on plantations, construction sites, in sweatshops and as bonded labor in Thai brothels. The SPDC freely allows the ethnic Shans to flee into Thailand, and has now begun a practice of stripping them of their Burmese identity papers as they leave, probably in order to ensure that they can never return.

6.11 Situation in Karenni State

In Karenni over 200 villages have been forcibly relocated and destroyed since 1996, after the SPDC broke a cease-fire agreement to attack the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP). Almost every hill village in the entire state has been destroyed. First the army issued orders that all villagers move to military-controlled camps within seven days or be “considered as enemy”. Patrols then went from village to village, burning and destroying everything and capturing or killing any villagers found. Some villagers are still struggling to survive by hiding in the forests, but most have fled to the towns or gone to the relocation sites, where they live in starvation conditions and are used by SPDC troops as forced labor maintaining army camps and as servants for soldiers. Since the beginning of 1998, SPDC troops have swept and destroyed villages in the south of the State where the relocation orders had not previously been strongly enforced, and have now begun expanding the relocations to include villages in northern Karenni State, along the Shan border, which had previously not been relocated because they are in an area partly controlled by the Karenni Nationalities People’s Liberation Front (KNPLF), a group which has a cease-fire deal with the SPDC.

6.12 List of Incidents

◆ On January 9, 1998, an SLORC column led by Major Htin Kyaw Thu from LIB 540 under the Operation Command 3 came to Beh Gaw Weh village, ThanTaung township, Karen State, and demanded a pig and 20,000 *kyat* in cash. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On January 12, 1998, SPDC troops led by column commander Major Kyi Min Oo from LIB 540 came to the cardamom fields of Dhe-doh village in Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and burnt down the huts together with cardamom seeds kept inside. The loss from the burning was estimated to be 150,000 *kyat*. The soldiers then entered the village and took the rice, salt, cooking oil, chickens and pigs of the villagers with making any payment. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On January 12, 1998, troops led by commander of LIB 547 looted three baskets of rice, 58 viss of betel nuts and five cattle from Gadoeta village of Kawkareik township, Karen State. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On January 19, 1998, troops led by Captain Saw Aung and Captain Aung Lwin of IB 355, came to Htee Klee Thu village in Kya-in township, Karen State, and looted 4,000 *kyat* and three chickens from the village. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On January 29, 1998, a military column from LIB 540 came to Tee Tabaw village in Htantabin township, Pegu Division, and burnt down four houses, looted cash and other items from the villagers. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On February 20, 1998, troops from LIB 709, 701 and IB 39 burnt down plantations of cardamom and betel nuts of the villagers from Gor Theh Doe, Khu Ler Doe, Si Hkeh Doe, Ploh Mu Doe, Ta Kwee Soe and Bu Sa Khee, Taungoo district, Karen State. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On February 27, 1998, Captain Tin Maung Shwe from LIB 118 under Division 44, ordered Kru See and No Awlan villages in Thaton district, Mon State, to cut timber for

building a military camp and said the village failing to do so would have to pay 15,000 *kyat*. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ In the last week of February 1998, every village in the 10 townships of Mon State was ordered to provide 10,000 *kyat* each for the celebration of the 24th anniversary of Mon State Day in March. Mudon township PDC issued an order on February 23, 1998, requiring the villages in each township to contribute 11,000 *kyat* each for a music competition, sports competition and a beauty contest on Mon State Day. (**Source: MIS**)

◆ On March 3, 1998, company commander, Zaw Win Han and troops from IB 29, came to Htee Theler village in Papun district, Karen State, and looted 50 baskets of rice and four sacks of salts from the villagers. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On March 8, 1998, a column of LIB 538 led by deputy commander Zaw Tun Tin came to Maw Ku Doe village in Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and burnt down two paddy barns belonging to Saw Pan Ka and Saw The Moo which contained a total of 250 baskets of paddy. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On April 10, 1998, a company from IB 63 entered Kyi Po Khee village, Pa-pun district, Karen State, and burnt down all the houses in the village. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ Between April 12-14, 1998, troops from LIB 349 and IB 30 arrived at the area of Yai Mu Plaw village tract and burnt down six villages, namely Kaw Moe Paw Doe, Baw Leh Doe, Tee Tha Doe, Lar Eh Doe, May Pwe Hta and Ta Ku Doe. Altogether 83 houses, 25 baskets of paddy and 3,386 baskets of rice were burnt down and 30 buffaloes were killed. Two elders who could not walk were burnt alive in their houses. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On April 22, 1998, troops from IB 59, IB 30 and LIB 349 entered Hsaw Naw Khee village killing 27 buffaloes and two pigs. The troops burnt down 12 houses and nine paddy barns containing the total of 1,900 baskets of paddy. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On April 27, 1998, troops from IB 231 led by Captain Thant Zin forcibly took 15 buffaloes from Meta Khale village in Kya-in-seik-kyi township, Karen State. The troops demanded 70,000 *kyat* from the owners as ransom. (**Source: MIS**)

◆ In May 1998, the Navy 401 Yan Naing Group under the Tenassarim Navy Headquarter forcibly took over 40 acres of farmland from eight villagers from Ka Daik and Maw Ngan village at Kanbauk district, Tenasserim Division. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ In May 1998, Col. Min Swe from Strategic Command 3 based in Kahtawni village, Ban Chaung tract, Tavoy township, Tenasserim Division, summoned the village headmen from Kahtawni, Kyauk Htoo, Thabyu Chaung and Maung Padu villages and ordered them to provide 6,000,000 *kyat* for funds for LIB 379 and 542. (**Source: Yoma 3**)

◆ In May 1998, IB 245, under the commander of Lt-Gen. Thein Sein, confiscated 500 acres of cultivated land in the area of Wan Khok and Kaeng Phawng villages in Keng Tung township, Shan State. The land was to be used for Keng Tung Regional College. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On May 1, 1998, No. 2 Tactical Command ordered the villagers from Dali, Aung Chantha, Tong Thai, Shwedo, Kyar Inn, Tagay, Bisakit, Htihuthan, Mekkataw, Mae Tala and Yathaya in Kya-in-seik-kyi township, Karen State, to provide a total of 213 tons of ironwood and to contribute labor for bridge construction. (**Source: MIS**)

◆ On May 2, 1998, policemen from Mudon Police Station took away the paddy from the barn of U Aung and Daw Aye Mi from Kamawat village, Mon State. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On May 4, 1998, troops from LIB 707 entered Por Htar village, Papun district,

Karen State, and looted one pig, five hens and three pots from Gay Nay Htoo Pah, three boxes of medicine, four tins of rice and one radio from Pa Roe Pah, three boxes, one sewing machine, a pig and 15 pots from Pah Kye Pah, five goats, three tins of rice and seven hens from Pah Lu Htan, and three cooking pots and 100 tins of rice from Maree Htee.

(Source: KIC)

◆ On May 6, 1998, a combined force of LIB 704 and LIB 706 entered Htee Bway Khee area, Papun district, Karen State and looted 4,000 *baht* from Saw Hsaw Pah Wah, 14,500 *baht* from Naw Thoo Pa and 1,000 *baht* from Saw Nyar Bwe Say. They looted 3000 *kyat*, 1,000 *baht*, and 20 silver coins from Yoe Kho Moe and also looted 10,000 *kyat*, 5,600 *baht* from Saw Kay Dah. **(Source: KIC)**

◆ On May 10, 1998, troops from LIB 701 entered Kho Mu Der village, Papun district, Karen State, and burnt all the houses in the village. They proceeded to Kay Pu village and again burnt down all the houses in the village. They also destroyed two farm huts. **(Source: KIC)**

◆ On May 31, 1998, No. 2 Tactical Command Commander Myint Hlaing and troops from LIB 709 came to Hart Toe village of Htantabin district, Pegu Division, and burnt down 10 houses, a church, five huts, 150 baskets of paddy and 35 hill plantation fields. **(Source: KIC)**

◆ On June 22, 1998, a military column from IB 59, led by commander Hla Than Maung, extorted 20 kg of rice from each household in Humu Doe, Ler Gla Doe and Glome Doe villages in Taungoon district, Karen State. **(Source: KIC)**

◆ In July 1998, 10,000 acres of farmland from the villages along the Thaton-Belin motor road were confiscated by the Division 44 based in Thaton, Mon State. These farmlands were taken by the military for their "10,000 Farmlands Project" for the division. The villages whose lands were confiscated were Mayagone, Mi Chaung Ai, Kalaung Inn, Shwe Yaung Pya, Ah Win Gyi, Zee Win, Cahung Zauk, Ye Wei, Kama Sai, Donwon, Taphet Swe, Shwe Hlwe, Taung Lay, Shwe Ein Ton, Dauk Yak, Khe Mauk, Tattu Gone, Kyat Khee Khat, Thit Cha Taung and Ka Dee, located along the Thaoton-Belin motor road in Mon State. **(Source: HRDU)**

◆ In July 1998, IB 61 ordered the villagers from Kyaung Tike village in Ye township, Mon State, to provide over 200 bamboo baskets for military operations. Each basket was 1.5 ft wide and high enough and to carry the mortar shells. Other 16 villagers in the Kyaung Tike village tract had to give 3,000 *kyat* each to the military. **(Source: Yoma 3)**

◆ In early July, 1998, LIB 408 Commander Lt-Col. Thet Hnin Oo summoned the owners of betel nut plantations from Ye Bon, New Lain and Kyauk Shut villages in Tenasserim Division. The Commander ordered the owners to sell 50 betel nuts from each betel plant without fail. The battalion would pay 50 *pya* for each betel nut which was much lower than the market price. Those who failed to sell betel nuts as demanded, would be punished and would not be allowed sell betel nuts in markets in Tavoy. **(Source: HRDU)**

◆ In the first week of August, 1998, SPDC LIB 547, 548 and 549 under the command of Operation Control Headquarters 12 based in Kawkareik, Karen State, confiscated 450 acres of farmland from 35 villagers in Nabu village tract, Kawkareik. The soldiers used the owners of the land to work for the military battalions without compensation or pay. **(Source: HRDU)**

◆ On August 12, 1998, village headmen from 18 villages in Kyaung Ywa tract in Ye

township, Mon State, were summoned to attend a meeting. The village track PDC chairman U Tun Ye ordered the villages to collect 22,000,000 *baht* for building a hospital in Kaung Ywa which was a part of a “Civil Town” project. (**Source: Yoma 3**)

◆ On August 25, 1998, about 3,800 acres from Daw Phaw Kale, Daw Phru Soe, Daw Htani, Daw Htane and Nar Lee Lay were confiscated by the IB 102. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ In September, LIB 408 stationed at Mintha village in Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division, forcibly ordered the Mintha villagers to sell 0.10 *viss* of lead per person daily. The soldiers bought one *viss* of lead for 450 *kyat* while the market price was 800 *kyat*. Those who failed to sell lead to the military were punished by having to dig a 10 ft wide and one ft high pit each along the Ye-Tavoy railway road and build the railway. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ In early September 1998, IB 104 called the village headmen from eight villages in Myin Kan Baw village track, Tavoy township, Tenasserim Division and ordered them to pay a crop tax. Villagers had to pay 18 *kyat* for each betel nut plant, 15 *kyat* for each coconut tree and 5 *kyat* for each mango, jack fruit, and lime tree. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ Starting from September 13, 1998, people in Mon State had to pay 700,000,000 *kyat* for the disabled and handicapped soldiers of the SPDC army. The full amount would be levied and paid to the Southeastern Military Command by the SPDC authorities. As a result the SPDC authorities in Ye township levied 60,000 *kyat* for each trading business, goldsmith shop and mini-market shop, 50,000 *kyat* for each Toyota Hilux car, 10,000 *kyat* for each small-sized trading boat, 6,000 *kyat* for each rubber plantation, 10,000 *kyat* for each betel nut plantation, and 5,000 *kyat* for each grocery shop and teashop, beauty parlor and workshop in Mon State. All the money was given to the military battalion commander of IB 61 and LIB 343. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On September 13, 1998, LIB 328 based in Murng Noong, Murng Khart township, Shan State, issued an order confiscating 60 acres of cultivated land belonging to the villages of Wan Tap, Wan Long and Wan Tong villages in the areas. The land was to be used to build a golf-course, a pond and a park for military personnel. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On September 15, 1998, troops from LIB 9, LIB 3 and IB 81 under the command of Division 44 burnt down nine villages, 80 km east of Hlaingbwe town, Karen State. The villages were Haw Waw Pho, Day Law Hta, Day Law Le Kala, Day My Kwee, Hta Ouk Khee Hta, Tala All Lu, Wa May Kho, Par Day and No La Pho. As a result, 3,000 villagers became homeless. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On September 25, 1998, troops from IB 25 led by battalion commander Myint Soe ordered Pasaw Oo, Pyeecha, Ler Padoe, Kahtawni, Wah Gone and Mawka Chai villages to give 50,000 *kyat* each to reconstruct their army camp. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ In October, 1998, 10 acres of farm land owned by U Chut kalar and over 30 acres of 10 other villagers from Sin Ku village, Kanbaw district, Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division, were confiscated without compensation by the LIB 401 stationed at the village. The soldiers also forcibly used the local villagers daily on their confiscated farms without pay. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ In October 1998, acting on the order of the Golden Triangle Special Regional Commander Lt-Gen. Thein Sein, LIB 314 confiscated 5,000 acres of paddy cultivated land from the villagers at Yang Mon, Yang La, Wan Kung, Nawng Kom and Wan Lur villages in Kaeng Tung township, Shan State. In November, the inhabitants of these five villages

were forced to grow corn for the military's confiscated land. The villagers would have to take the responsibility for all aspects of the cultivation process, from preparing the ground to harvest. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On October 6, 1998, troops from IB 48 and IB 30 seized 50 men and women from Baw Gali village, Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and ordered them to carry food supplies to Busa Khee and Takwee Soe army camps. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On October 14, 1998, a column of the special forces led by Captain Maung Maung, composed of selected soldiers from IB 60, IB 48, IB 59, IB 53, IB 73 and LIB 351 under the SPDC Northern Military Command, destroyed and burnt the houses owned by U Soe and U Tin Win, village leaders of Thit Cha Seik village, Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division. Because they could not find the two leaders. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ Between November 6 and 8, 1998, the SPDC mobile column of IB 104 and 280 composed of 200 soldiers destroyed the hill cultivations of local villagers in the eastern region of Tavoy township, Tenasserim Division. The villages whose plots were destroyed were Kami, Gaung Say Chaung, Ka Htaung Ni, Kalit Gyi, Samuhtaw, Seikku and Kyauk Twin in the eastern region of Tavoy township. The soldiers claimed that the action was aimed to cut the food supply and communications for the KNU troops in the region. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ In November, 1998, farms and plantations of the local villagers along the Ka Daik and Ohn Pin Gwin village, Kanbauk district, Tenasserim Division, were confiscated by the Navy 401 Yan Naing Group under the Tenasserim Navy Headquarters, without compensation. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ In November 1998, paddy was forcibly confiscated from the seven villages in Bein Chaung district, Tavoy township, Tenasserim Division, by the troops from SPDC LIB 379 and LIB 373 under the command of Military Strategic Command 5. Soldiers took away 1,250 baskets of paddy from Phaung Daw village, 1,200 baskets from Han Kapi village, 500 baskets from Pha Tha Ye Pu, 1,200 baskets from Ka Htaw Ni, 640 baskets from Tha Byu Chaung, 1,500 baskets from Pya Tha Chaung, and 700 baskets from Kyauk Htoo village. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On November 9, 1998, troops from IB 35 led by commander Kyaw Thein demanded 20,000 *kyat* from Malardaw village, 20,000 *kyat* from Yulor village and 10,000 *kyat* from Kumulor village in Nyaunglebin district, Pegu Division. These sums of money had to be handed over to the military every month. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On November 11, 1998, troops from IB 35 went into Ho-khee and Sho-hta villages in Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and saw villagers carrying cardamom seeds. The troops took away a total of 56 *viss* of cardamoms from the villagers. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On November 16, 1998 the KNLA ambushed SPDC troops from IB 285 at Pyicha village, Palaw township, Tenasserim Division, and killed five SPDC soldiers, injured one, and destroyed one truck. After that, SPDC troops clearing the area, looted and attacked the villagers. Four villagers were wounded and some property of the villagers seized. The troops entered Pyicha village and looted Saw Too To's properties, worth 40,000 *kyat*, Naw Paw Hay's belongings worth 20,000 *kyat*, Saw Ser Ser's shop and other properties. After the clash, SPDC's IB 285, Battalion Commander Soe Myint Aung demanded 2,000,000 *kyat* compensation for his fallen and injured soldiers from Pyicha village. He also forced Pyicha villagers to clear the area near the motor road for one week. He allowed the villagers

to take a break of only one hour during each day's work. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On November 20, 1998, Mang Win Pe, a private from the DKBA, went into Hteesi-baw village in Thaton district, Mon State, and extorted a wrist watch worth 19,000 *kyat* from Saw Maung Nyo. On that day troops from IB 8 led by commander Min Naing severely beat Saw Kyaw Thein, who was a village headman of Lah-aw-kher village, and also demanded one chicken from every house of that village. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ In December, 1998, LIB 406 based in Dauklauk village and LIB 407 based in Padauk Gone village in Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division, forcibly purchased the farm products from the local villagers at a much lower price than the market price. The soldiers threatened the villages with land confiscation if they failed to sell the products to the military on their fixed price. The military purchased one *viss* of dried betel nuts for 700 *kyat* whereas the actual market price was between 1,100-1,200 *kyat*. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ In December 1998, 12 wards in the Kyauk-pa-daung township, Mandalay Division, were ordered to give 3,000 *kyat* for every water hydrant in addition to the regularly collected water tax. The people did not know why this was being collected. Despite payments of the tax, there is no water supply. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ In December 1998, every household had to pay 100 *kyat* for the Miss Beauty contestant 100 *kyat* for military training at the IB 78. This military training was compulsory for four USDA members from every ward. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On December 6, 1998, a military column led by Major Aung Thein Oo from LIB 341 entered Narky Plaw village in Papun township, Karen State. The troops shot randomly and later burnt down the whole village. The troops took 1,000 baskets of paddy and burnt the entire barns in the village later. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On December 24, Linke township PDC secretary U Than Lwin and a team of paddy purchasers arrived at Pon Hton village in Linke township, Shan State. They ordered the villagers to sell them eight baskets each without fail. (*Source: HRDU*)



The DKBA troops burned down the houses in H'Tay Hsah (Nabu) township in mid-October 1998.



The SPDC troops from IB26 burned down the farmfield huts (above) and some of the ricefields of Bu Sah Kee village. They pulled up and destroyed some of the paddy (below) on September 6, 1998. (Photo by KHRG)





Ruins of a house in Saw Wah Der village, burned by LIB 707 on June 29, 1998 (above). The villagers had failed to obey orders to move to Kler Lah village, so the troops burned all the nicest houses in the village (below). (Photo by KHRG)





Since the burning of part of their village, Saw Wah Der villagers have had to flee and live hidden lives in the forest in small groups; this is one of their hidden shelters. (Photo by KHRG)



Khoh Lu village, Ler Doh township, which was completely burned down by SPDC troops on August 20, 1998. (Photo by KHRG)



Kler Kee village which was burned down by SPDC troops on November 20, 1998. Some houses were completely burned, while others were being destroyed. (Photo by KHRG)





Ricefields near Kle Kee village. On 21 November 1998, SPDC troops went through these fields cutting the rice off at the stalks, bundling the together and threshing off any developing grains onto the ground destroying the crop. In photo, the place where they left the bundles of cut rice. (Photo by KHRG)



A farmer from Khoh Lu village, showing where some of his paddy left by the SPDC troops after destroying most of them by those troops on 19 August 1998. (Photo by KHRG)



Khoh Lu village where SPDC troops destroyed much of the rice crop on 19 August and burned the village on 20 August 1998. As a result, even the pigs have nothing to eat, as can be seen by their emaciated condition. (Photo by KHRG)



Villagers fleeing from their villages because an SPDC Column was coming into their villages, Mon State. (Photo by S. Han, HRDU)



The villagers fleeing into the forest because the SPDC troops came into their village, Mon State. (Photo by S. Han, HRDU)

A truck ferry people between Three Pagodas Pass and Than Phu Zayat, Mon State (Photo by S. Han, HRDU)





Ler Doh township. Thaw Ngeh Der villagers eating out in the fields by night because an SPDC Column has entered their area and they do not dare to stay in their village. (Photo by KHRG)



People from Muh Kit village fleeing into the forest on 15 December 1998, because an SPDC Column was patrolling near their village. (Photo by KHRG)



People from Muh Kit village hiding in a hastily-erected shelter in the ricefields because an SPDC Column was patrolling near their village, mid-December 1998. (Photo by KHRG)



Villagers in Ler Doh township fleeing into the forest and living in hiding to avoid SPDC patrols which have burned some of their villagers. (Photo by KHRG)



Pa T___, aged 16, and his mother, both from Tee Muh Hta village, Ler Doh township, Pa T___ has been blind since birth. When SPDC troops shelled Tee Muh Hta village without warning on 20 November 1998, he fled into the forest alone and spent 15 days in the forest with nothing to eat. (Photo by KHRG)



Ay Pree Paw, aged 4, and Si Mu Paw, aged 3. When SPDC troops shelled Tee Muh Hta village on 20 November 1998, they fled into the forest with their 80 year-old grandmother and their 17 month-old sister, and the group was alone in the forest for 10 days with no rice to eat before they were found out by the other villagers. (Photo by KHRG)



Naw Y___, her 7 children and parents, Buh Baw Kee village, Lu Thaw township. SPDC LIB 361 troops shot her husband dead on sight in late 1998. (Photo by KHRG)



Dta Oh Der villagers living in hiding in the forest, Lu Thaw township. The containers on the right are hollowed bamboo, used for carrying water. (Photo by KHRG)



Gkaw Weh village, Lu Thaw township, completely burned by LIB 369 troops. (Photo by KHRG)



Paddy burned by the SPDC troops in Pa'an district. (Photo by KHRG)



Teachers and some students from Tee Muh Hta village school, which has been closed since SPDC troops shelled the village in November 1998. Very few children in the region have any chance to attend school any more. (Photo by KHRG) ▲



Village children in eastern Ngaunglebin district, who have never been to school because they need to help their parents to survive and because schools are targets for SPDC troops. (Photo by KHRG)

7. Rights of Minorities

7.1 Background

Armed opposition of ethnic groups has existed since Burma gained its independence from Britain in 1948. These groups have engaged in insurgency activities against the central government in order to gain greater autonomy or, better, complete independence. When the military government reasserted power in September 1988 after suppressing the pro-democracy movement, it pursued offensives against the armed opposition groups. The newly-formed SLORC also adopted a policy of negotiating cease-fires with individual ethnic groups rather than dealing with the “Democratic Alliance of Burma” (DAB), the umbrella organization which grouped them together. Since 1989, the SLORC/SPDC has agreed to cease-fires with 16 of the armed ethnic minority groups. However, cease-fires have sometimes been short-lived. In March 1995, a cease-fire agreement between the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and the SPDC broke down after three months. In January 1996, the SPDC signed a cease-fire agreement with the Muang Tai Army (MTA) led by Khun Sa in Shan State. Nevertheless, other Shan opposition groups have continued their armed struggle against the SPDC.

In areas where cease-fire agreements have been reached, human rights abuses continue to be committed. In fact, in these “national reconciliation” areas human rights abuses have increased rather than abated. The groups signing cease-fires entered their agreement with the SPDC with the understanding that it was a first step, to be followed by a peace agreement, development, and a political settlement of their demands. Beyond the cease-fire agreements, no progress has been made. There has been no move on the part of the SPDC to engage in political discussions with opposition groups to reinforce the military cease-fire agreements. Under the terms of the cease-fire agreement, some groups have been allowed to keep their arms and soldiers; however, the SPDC has vastly increased the number of its soldiers in those areas.

Cease-fires groups are also unhappy with the implementation of SPDC’s so-called local development projects. SPDC officials have redirected development project funds into their own pockets. As a result, the groups have had to finance the construction of schools and hospital facilities as well as provide the necessary infrastructure themselves. By doing this, cease-fire groups have attempted to prove that they are able to carry out their own development projects efficiently and humanely.

The continuing armed conflicts in the Karen, Karenni, Shan and Chin States have been accompanied by massive human rights violations. The SPDC army routinely seized civilians to work as porters, the majority of whom are members of ethnic minorities. These civilians are arbitrarily detained, tortured and ill-treated. They are severely punished, especially when they are unable to perform all that is required of them. Further abuses of porters include being repeatedly beaten with bamboo sticks or rifle butts, being deprived of food, water, rest and medical treatment, and being killed.

Hundreds of thousands of others, including many ethnic minorities, have been

forced to work as unpaid laborers on new construction “development” projects in the past years. No one is spared, neither the sick nor the elderly, neither women nor children. For many, this work is utterly degrading, and causes cruel and inhuman suffering, which often results in death. Countless numbers of ethnic minorities have been removed from their homes to resettlement areas, where the conditions of the “resettlement” are brutally enforced by the army. In areas where the SPDC suspects opposition, some or even all of the civilian population is forced at gunpoint to move into relocation camps, where they are told that they cannot return home until the opposition groups among them surrender. If villagers do not obey, they are summarily executed. Their homes, crops and livestock are also destroyed. Such “scorched earth” campaigns have been conducted in Karenni State, Shan State and Karen State.

72 Threats to cease-fire groups for their support of the NLD

On August 11, 1998, the Karenni National People’s Liberation Front (KNPLF), the Shan National People’s Liberation Organization (SNPLO), and the Kayan New Land Party (KNLP) – all groups having cease-fires signed – issued a joint letter calling on the SPDC to enter into a tripartite dialogue with the NLD and the representatives of the ethnic groups. The letter also stated support for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s call to convene a People’s Parliament.

On August 18, 1998, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) issued a statement calling for dialogue and the SPDC to respect the results of the 1990 elections. The Shan State Army (SSA) a coalition of the Shan State Army-North (SSA-North), Shan State National Army (SSNA), and the Shan United Revolutionary Army (SURA recently renamed Shan State Army-South) issued an even stronger statement on September 15, 1998, calling for a tripartite dialogue and for a transfer of power to the 1990 election-winning party. In this coalition, the first two groups have entered cease-fire agreements with the SPDC. The SURA has not.

After rounding up the MPs-elect and many key NLD members, the SPDC ordered representatives of the six cease-fire groups to go to Rangoon for a meeting: these included the New Mon State Party (NMSP), the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the United Wa State Army (UWSA), the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA-a Kokang group) and the Shan Special Region 4. Lieutenant Colonel Than Aye from the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) named Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as an “enemy of the state” like Western countries and the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB). Lt-Col. Than Aye told those gathered that as a result of signing cease-fire agreements, they were allied with the SPDC. “As the NLD is the enemy of the Tatmadaw,” he continued, “any group that supports the NLD becomes our enemy.” In addition, the SPDC sent a representative to Loikaw to put pressure on the KNPLF, KNLP, and SNPLO to retract their joint statement of supporter the NLD or deny having made it.

73 Forcible closure of Mon National Schools

Since July 1, 1998, the Mon State Peace and Development Council has instructed its local authorities to close down all Mon National schools in the whole of Mon State;

these were built and run as self-supporting entities of the local Mon community in the State. The authorities claimed the teaching Mon literature is illegal and the running of Mon National Schools in the villages is against existing laws.

This forcible closure of Mon National Schools in Mon State is a second time a promise made has been broken by the General Khin Nyunt, Secretary 1 of the SPDC. When the New Mon State party met the SPDC leaders on June 29, 1995 after concluding a cease-fire, Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt stated that the teaching of Mon literature was not possible in school time in government schools according to the SPDC's policy. However, he promised that if the students in Mon State wished to study Mon literature, they could attend special Mon literature studies outside school time in government schools. Many Mon students at the village level joined the Mon literature classes and they were strongly supported by the Mon community. However in 1997, the Mon State LORC issued an official statement that it would not allow the use of government schools any longer to teach Mon literature. They later instructed the concerned township authorities to prohibit the teaching of Mon literature in government schools. The local authorities forced Mon teachers to leave the schools and ordered the students through the parents not to join the teaching of Mon literature classes. The government teachers also kept all school materials after school time and did not allow the Mon teachers to use these materials.

Concerning this new instruction, NMSP leaders asked the authorities to explain the reason why they ordered a stop to the teaching of Mon literature. Gen. Ket Sein, commander-in-chief of Southeast Military Command, replied that the Mon community must build their schools if the students really wanted to study the subject. Therefore, the Mon community leaders built many Mon schools in rural Mon villages with their own funds and manual labor in order to teach Mon literature in the 1998-99 school year. At the beginning of 1998, many Mon literature schools had been built and started to run in the first week of June 1998.

On July 16, 1998, an order to close the Mon National schools in entire the Mon State was issued by the Commander of Military Intelligence Unit 5 (MI-5) based in Moulmein, Mon State. This order affected all 123 Mon National Schools and an estimated 6,000 students. This order furthermore warned anyone who failed to comply would be arrested. (*Source: HURFOM*)

For additional information on the ethnic minorities situation in Burma see also the following chapters: Chapter 1, Extra-judicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions; Chapter 5, Forced Relocation and Internally Displaced Persons; Chapter 6, Deprivation of Livelihood; Chapter 11, Freedom of Movement; and Chapter 13, Abuse of Women.

74. Meeting for Shan New Year disturbed

A meeting of preparation for Shan New Year was held at a meeting hall inside the Haung Leik monastery, Tacheleik township, Shan State, on August 8, 1998. While the meeting was going on, a group of soldiers led by Captain Min Wai from LIB 331 surrounded the monastery compound. The troops ordered the people at the meeting not to come out until 6:00 p.m. The organizers of the meeting explained the reasons of the meeting and asked the soldiers to let them leave the monastery. However, the soldiers did not allow anyone to depart. Sai Lin and Nang Bain, two Shan youth leaders, negotiated with the

troops and finally participants from the meeting were able to rush to their homes. Two Shan leaders were later taken to the headquarters of LIB 331 and interrogated by the battalion commander. Though they were later released because the authorities could not charge to them, all monasteries in Tacheleik were sealed off between August 8-12, 1998. (**Source: HRDU**)

8. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, Degrading Treatment or Punishment

8.1 Background

Political activists routinely face torture or ill-treatment during their time of arrest, interrogation and detention in Burma. In many cases, torture or ill-treatment have taken place during the often prolonged periods of incommunicado detention following arrest, while the prisoners are isolated from the outside world and under the complete control of their interrogators.

At least six sections of the state security forces have been implicated in the torture and ill-treatment of political and other detainees in their custody. These are the regular army (Pyithu Tatmadaw, or People's Defense Forces); the People's Police Force; the Directorate of Defense Services Intelligence (DDSI); the Special Investigations Department (SID); the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI). The activities of DDSI, SID, CID and BSI are coordinated by the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) under the direct control of the SPDC. The DDSI is commonly known by the acronym MIS or MI (Military Intelligence Service) and is the agency most frequently identified as inflicting torture during interrogations. Since 1988, the units under its control (MI-1, MI-2, MI-3 etc.) have nearly doubled from 14 in 1989 to 23 in 1991. Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt, Secretary-1 of the SPDC, is the head of the DDSI.

Over 20 primary detention centers, where brutal interrogation and other methods of torture take place, have been identified throughout Rangoon and in seven other divisions and states across Burma. These include the secret DDSI interrogation center at Ye Kyi Aing camp just outside Rangoon; Insein Prison and its annex; Yankin township military registration camp; Sanchaung police station; Mingladon DDSI interrogation center; Kyeikkasan old race course and Hmawbe Ye Nyunt training camp (all in Rangoon Division); Bassein township MIS office, Mayaungmya prison and Maubin prison (all in Irrawaddy Division); Special Branch II office; Police Station No.8 and Mandalay Prison (Mandalay Division); Tharawaddy Prison and Pegu township prison (Pegu Division); Regiment 31 Headquarters in Thabyuzayut township and Moulmein MIS office (Mon State); Pa-an township MI-5 office (Karen State); Regiment 59 Headquarters in Mawchee township and MI-27 office in Loikaw (Karenni State); Myitkyina Prison, No.8 Northern Command Headquarters and Special Branch II office (all in Kachin State).

Political opposition activists often endure particularly severe treatment while in detention. Torture is used to punish them and to compel them to cooperate with their interrogators. Many of them are forced to sign "confessions" admitting to anti-SPDC activities or implicating colleagues or friends in such activities. Some are forced to sign documents confirming that they had been well-treated during interrogation or in jail, and others say that they have been held incommunicado following torture to allow time for the physical signs of torture to heal before anyone could see them.

82 Solitary confinement

An iron rod, about 0.5 m long is often placed horizontally between the shackled legs of prisoners in solitary confinement, forcing them to stand or lay with their legs astride. Prisoners are locked in tiny cells during their confinement. Normally, small chamber pots are placed in each cell. The pots are never emptied, so the smell becomes unbearable and the cell damp and wet. In the worst cases of solitary confinement, prisoners are forced to stand with both arms tied above their head; they are forced to urinate and defecate while standing. Small daily food rations of soup made from rice are slid through the iron bars from outside of the cell. No blankets or mats are provided; prisoners are forced to sleep on the concrete floor. Most days, prisoners are taken out of the cell, forced to stand in the standard position, with their legs splayed apart, and beaten. Solitary confinement usually lasts for at least one month and may continue for up to three months. In some cases, political prisoners are forced to remain in solitary confinement indefinitely.

8.2.1 Beatings

The SPDC uses many forms of beating to intimidate and torture prisoners and detainees. Soldiers use typical as well as unusual implements to beat their victims, including their fists, combat boots, rifle butts, leather-coated pipes, wooden sticks, sticks made from three interlaced pieces of cane, solid bamboo sticks about 1 m in length, and hard plastic water pipes. Victims often sustain serious permanent injuries including paralysis and even death.

The SPDC beatings are designed to harm physically and humiliate their victims. The following are a few of the typical types of beatings: the prisoner is beaten while he/she stands and embraces a post while both hands are held firmly by another person; the prisoner is beaten while lying prone on the ground; the prisoner is beaten while being forced to stand with both legs chained; the prisoners is beaten while being forced to crawl along the ground; the prisoner is shackled, a long iron bar is placed between his/her legs, and is forced to crawl while being beaten; a prisoner is beaten while being forced to do continuous squat-jumps. Authorities do not hold back during these beatings; they strike victims in the face, chest, abdomen, and back; they also jump on the backs of prisoners while they are being forced to crawl on the ground. Prisoners are routinely seriously wounded; they suffer severe internal bleeding, fractured skulls, broken bones, and paralysis.

The SPDC uses various methods of psychological torture along with inflicting beatings. For example, a SLORC/SPDC officer might ask his victim if he is afraid and forced the prisoners to reply in a demeaning manner. The prisoner is forced to reply: "I am afraid of you, *shint*." *Shint* is a polite Burmese suffix used by females; the term is not meant to be used by men. When a prison officer asks, "What is your name?" a prisoner must reply, "My name is *Ma* [+ name], *shint*." *Ma* is a Burmese prefix for the names of younger women; it is never used by men. The use of these terms is meant to degrade the prisoners. Some prisoners, infuriated by what they are forced to do, refuse to answer the officers in that way; they are severely beaten by the officers until they comply with the orders. Some prisoners are beaten until they fall unconscious, when they awake, they are beaten again. There have been reports that some prisoners, who can no longer endure the

torture, knock their head against the stone walls to fracture their skulls and render themselves unconscious. When prisoners sustain fractured skulls or severe bleeding from the head, they are finally sent to the hospital. However, once in the hospital, the prisoners still do not receive adequate medical attention. If they cry out in pain, they are often beaten for being noisy. Prison officers are not charged with any crimes in these cases, even if a prisoner suffers permanent paralysis or gangrene; the SLORC/SPDC authorities protect their security forces at all costs. (*Source: ABSDF*)

8.2.2. Ill-treatment during forced portering and labor

Reports indicate that SPDC army still uses torture and ill-treatment against ethnic minorities in Shan State, Mon State, Karenni State and Tenasserim Division. Members of ethnic minorities are forced to serve as porters for the army. Any person who cannot carry the required load is beaten with bamboo sticks or rifle butts. Deprivation of food, water, rest and medical care is also a common method of punishment.

Local civilians are arbitrarily seized by the military and forced to serve as porters during military offensives to carry heavy army equipment and supplies. Some porters are held in army custody for periods between a few days to a month or more. Porters who have managed to escape have given consistent and horrific accounts of extra-judicial executions, beatings, and lack of food and medicine. When porters become exhausted from being overworked, underfed, and sometimes beaten, they are subjected to torture and sometimes beaten to death and left in the jungle. Female porters, mostly ethnic women living in combat areas, are subjected to gang-rape and other sexual crimes.

8.2.3. Other forms of ill-treatment during forced labor

The use of forced labor on SPDC's infrastructure projects is widespread across Burma. During the past nine years, SPDC has increasingly forced hundreds of thousands of civilian laborers to build railway lines, airports, dams, quarries, and roads without compensation. Conditions at work sites are often harsh, in many cases soldiers use inhuman and degrading treatment to keep laborers working; forced laborers are often shackled in chains and receive inadequate food and medicine.

8.3. List of Incidents

- ◆ On January 16, 1998, Column Commander Saw Aung and Deputy Commander Captain Aung Lwin of IB 355, came to Kawkeh village of Kya Ein township, Karen. The troops arrested and tortured two villagers, Saw Maung Kway and Saw Maung Pulu. The village headman had to ransom them with 200,000 *kyat* in cash. (*Source: KIC*)
- ◆ On February 20, 1998, Captain Soe Naing of IB 39 tortured, by various means, eight village ward leaders from Kler Lar village of Htantabin township, Pegu Division. The victims of torture were Saw Ka Hser, Saw U Ler, Saw Lar Has, Saw Poe Gor, Saw Tha Choe, Saw Htay Kyu, Saw Tar Or Mu and Saw Ba Cho. (*Source: KIC*)
- ◆ On March 21, 1998, a column of IB 19 led by commander Kyi Lwin severely

tortured porters they forcibly seized. Among them was Saw Pah Si, a villager from Pa Lu Hkee villaged, Pa-pun district, Karen State. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ In April 1998, military troops led by division commander Thet Htun from LIB 2 came to the house of Saw Chee Lee, aged 48 in Mi Sakit villaged, Kya-in-seik-kyi township, Karen State. The soldiers accused him for having communication with the KNU and tied him with rope. They also took the property of Saw Chee Lee. He was taken to Mi Sakit creek while his hands were tied behind his back with rope. He was also blindfolded and then tied to a tree. The soldiers questioned him about weapons and walkie-talkies, but he could not answer them as he was not a KNU soldier. The Soldiers beat him all over his body with a stick, punched his face with their bare fists, and burnt his legs and genitals. They left him overnight and continued torturing him the next day. He was tied to a tree up side-down and kicked by soldiers wearing military boots. He was released after two days. (**Source: Yoma 3**)

◆ On April 3, 1998, Major Kyaw Sein from IB 96 interrogated Saw Myint Soe from Waw Kadeh village in Thaton district, Karen State. He was beaten severely and dipped into water. After his interrogation 1,000 *kyat* was taken from him and he was released later. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On May 19, 1998, U Mya Maung and Ma Kyi Aye of Pegu quarter, Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division, were arrested and searched by the SPDC troops. As the troops could not find anything from them, they were severely beaten and later released. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On June 6, 1998, a SPDC division led by Captain Hla Naing Htwe entered Dani Kyar villaged, Ye township, Mon State and rounded up all the villagers. They interrogated the villagers asking if they knew about the Mon troops who attacked the SPDC on May 28 near the village. Each villager was punched two times hard in the stomach. Some were also beaten all over their bodies with wooden sticks. Some suspects were tied with ropes and tortured. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On June 28, 1988, troops from DKBA Brigade 999, arrested and beat up Saw Myint Lwin, a villager from Korteh village, Pa-an district, Karen State. He lost a tooth as a result. The troops demanded the villagers ransom him with 80,000 *kyat*. He was released on July 8, on the payment of the ransom. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On July 19, 1998, troops from IB 367 and LIB 703 arrested Saw Mu Klaw Htoo from Ler Klah villaged tract, Nyaunglebin district, Karen State, and tortured him severely. Later the troops shot and killed him. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On July 30, 1998, Second Lieutenant Ri Ding, from LIB 374, No 2 company, commander of Kantlang army post, ordered Aa Huat, an 18-year-old Chin farmer, to buy alcoholic drinks from Turahaing villaged, which is a day's walk from Kantlang villaged, Peletwa township, Chin State. Aa Huat could not find any alcohol drinks and came back with empty-handed. As a result, Second Lieutenant Ri Ding beat him at the army post with a 1 m long and 6 cm thick bamboo stick on his head, arms, his backbone and all over his body until he lost consciousness. (**Source: CHRO**)

◆ On October 18, 1998, about 80 soldiers from IB 247 led by commander Htun Win came to Nawng Pha village, Munr Nai township, Shan State. They arrested the village headman Zitta and grilled him about the Shan armed group operating in the vicinity. When the headman said he did not know anything about it, the commander slit the headman's

arms with a knife. Each of his arms was slit in two places, each along the length of the arm about 12 cm long and 1 cm deep. They soldiers later tied him up and beat him severely. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On October 20, 1998, LIB 502 ordered Long Kaeng village in Murng Pan township, Shan State, to move to Murng Pan town. About 40-50 troops from LIB 502 led by commander Aye Thaung arrested the village headman and wrongfully accused him of failing to report the activities of a Shan armed group. The soldiers beat him, stabbed his thighs with a pointed knife several times and put chili powder on his wounds. They then covered his mouth with a plastic sheet and beat him with a stick until he lost consciousness four or five times. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On November 18, 1998, troops from IB 8 led by commander Min Naing arrested and severely beat Saw Maung Nu and Saw Chit Dah from Shwe-yaung-pay village, Thaton district, Karen State. On 21 November, Saw Chit Dah managed to escape while Saw Maung Nu was still under arrest. As a result the troops demanded two goats as a ransom for his release. On that day, those troops also went into Kler-kher village and extorted two viss of chicken from Pah Day and half a viss of chicken from every house. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On November 30, 1998, troops from DKBA led by Moe Gyo went to Htee Moo Khee village in Pa-an district, Karen State, and arrested Pah Nya, aged 28, Pah maung Tu, aged 28, Kaw Wah, aged 17 and Toe Hoe, aged 28. They all were severely tortured by cutting their skin to make them bleed. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On December 4, 1998, Maung Win a villager from Mayagon villaged, Belin township, Mon State, was beaten and tortured as he complained about the forced labor order at a suger cane plantation project by the battalion under the Southeastern military command. His hands were tied by the soldiers from LIB 8 and beaten with wooden sticks all over his body. He was then taken to the military outpost and was continuously beaten. The soldiers took off his shirt and left him outside for the whole of the winter night. The next day, he was released only after he agreed to give eight goats to the military. (*Source: HRDU*)

9. Freedom of Belief and Religious Discrimination

9.1 Background

During the 1988 demonstrations for democracy and human rights, many monks took an active role and were arrested for their prominent participation. An estimated 200 Buddhist monks are imprisoned at Insein Prison alone. Many others are believed to be held captive in prison labor camps.

On August 8, 1990, in commemoration of the second anniversary of the democracy uprising, more than 7,000 monks and novices walked through the streets of Mandalay, solemnly and peacefully accepting alms from the people. Soldiers confronted the monks and opened fire, killing two monks and two students and wounding seventeen others. One novice monk disappeared. Following the massacre, the Monks Union (Sangha Sammagi) of Mandalay, led by the Ven. U Yewata, announced “pattam nikkujjina kamma” (overturning the bowl) against the military and their families. This refusal to accept alms is used as a rebuke to lay people. According to the Vinaya, the rules of conduct for Theravada Buddhist monks, a lay person who has committed any of eight offenses should be ostracized. These eight offenses are: striving for that which is not gained, striving for that which is not a benefit, acting against a monastery, vilifying and making insidious comparisons about monks, inciting dissension among monks, defaming the Buddha, defaming the Dhamma, and defaming the Sangha (the order of monks). If a layman acts in any of these ways, the Sangha believes it should refuse all contact with him.

This powerful religious boycott, which began in Mandalay, spread like wildfire across Burma, causing alarm and trauma to the military regime. By October 1990, the religious sanctions against the military and their families had reached Rangoon. The regime retaliated against the monks’ boycott by staging a massive clampdown on the Sangha. Monasteries were surrounded by armed troops trapping monks inside. Electricity, water, and communication lines were cut and monks were prevented from going on their daily alms round. After maintaining the blockade for one week, armed troops entered monasteries and arrested leaders. People living near some of the monasteries were also forced to move out and their homes were destroyed. More than 35 monasteries were raided and more than 3,000 monks and novices were arrested. Twenty monasteries were seized and expropriated. Most monks were accused of possessing antimilitary literature, including articles by the NLD. Three monks were arrested for allegedly having written inflammatory poems in their diaries and notebooks. In a crude attempt to smear the Sangha Sammagi movement, some monks were charged with gambling, illegal possession of jade or heroin, and rape. When General Khin Nyunt, the head of Military Intelligence, explained these arrests on state radio, however, he only accused the Mandalay monks of working with the defunct Communist Party of Burma.

All independent Sangha organizations have been banned since 1990. Monks are under close watch by the Military Intelligence. Many monks have been arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for their support to the NLD and other democracy

activities nationwide since 1990.

Many other religious groups, both Christian and Muslim, have also been persecuted under the military regime of the SPDC. Burmese people cannot enjoy the freedoms guaranteed under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which clearly states that all people have the right to their beliefs to their own religious choice. There are many cases of Christians being forced to convert to Buddhism by the regime. In 1994-95, the military lured Chin children from their Christian parents with promises of education in Rangoon. When the parents tried to communicate with their children or to learn of their whereabouts and well-being, they were denied all access. Later they discovered that instead of having been placed in schools, their children were being converted to Buddhism in Buddhist monasteries, with their heads shaven and dressed in novices' robes.

92 SPDC's control over Buddhism

The SPDC monitors the activities of members of all religious faiths, including Buddhism, in part because congregation members have in the past been politically active. After the monks' boycott in 1990 in Mandalay, the SPDC banned all independent monks associations. The only Sangha organizations recognized now are the Sangha Mahanayaka Committees. The senior monks are given the task of establishing rules to maintain discipline and generally oversee all Sangha affairs. In addition to the State Sangha Mahanayaka Committee, there are local Sangha Mahanayaka Committees. The SPDC has formed Sangha organizations in the villages, townships, and districts. All monks are required to obey the orders of the organizations, whether or not they belong. Buddhist monks cannot do anything without the permission of the SPDC. For example, only the township or district Sangha organization may authorize a monastery to build additions or renovate old buildings.

The members of the Sangha Mahanayaka Committees are all elderly and learned monks who should be highly respected and venerated. Since it is well known that the SPDC controls the committees, the people no longer esteem these monks. The regime wishes to include as many senior monks as possible within the ranks of committees. As a result, monks are pressured to join, despite being reluctant to do so. As an added coercion, monasteries are kept under strict surveillance until a monk agrees to join. In the process, monks are vilified by SPDC propaganda. Once a monk relents and joins the committee, the pressure eases. The SPDC then showers the monastery with lavish gifts, while the monk loses his independence and the respect of the people. The regime has made special efforts to link itself with Buddhism as a means of asserting its popular legitimacy. Photos of SPDC officials paying homage or making donations to pagodas throughout the country appear regularly in the official newspapers.

In a further attempt to gain legitimacy and respect, The SPDC organizes elaborate ceremonies to award titles to monks. In the past, these titles were granted only to very learned monks and carried great honor. Now, however, they are viewed as either a reward for submission or a bait with which to lure senior monks to come under SPDC control.

In 1996, Lt-Gen. Myo Nyunt, former SPDC Minister of Religion, sent a letter to the senior monks' committee demanding that all those who wished to be ordained receive approval from the SPDC. Furthermore, in September 1996, SPDC accused the NLD of trying to divide the "loyalty of the Sangha" by sending members to various monasteries to

befriend monks. The SPDC also issued Order No. 85 that prevent any NLD members from being ordained. The Sangha Mahanayaka Committees were instructed to contact all levels of SPDC offices if any NLD member sought ordination. The order also prevented members of other political parties and their families from being ordained.

The SPDC has been accused by the monks inside Burma of having stolen many precious objects from the temples across Burma in the name of renovating Buddhist religious statues. Buddhist monks in Mandalay accused the SPDC of trying to find and steal sacred rubies from Maha Myatmuni pagoda in Mandalay which are believed to give the owner the power to defeat any enemy.

9.3 Arrest of Buddhist monks in 1998

Dozens of Buddhist monks were arrested in 1998 for their peaceful demonstrations and support for the NLD. The SPDC has escalated its suppression on the Buddhist monks in the country since the NLD's call on May 27, 1998 for convening a People's Parliament.

As a consequence of the suppression, demonstrations by Buddhist monks across the country broke out in 1998. On July 14, 1998, around 300 Buddhist monks held a demonstration in Sittwe, Arakan State. On September 4 and 5, 1998, about 200 Buddhist monks joined a demonstration with 60 students in Mandalay. Similarly on September 4, 1998, a demonstration took place by 260 Buddhist monks in Monywa, Sagaing Division, and another demonstration was held in Tavoy, Tenassarim Division, on September 9, 1998, by 170 Buddhist monks. A further demonstration took place on November 23, 1998, in Mandalay by Buddhist monks.

The SPDC detained the monks who took part in the demonstrations. On July 14, two monks from Sittwe, Arakan State; on August 18, one monk from Belin, Mon State; on September 4-5, five monks from Mandalay; on September 14, three monks from Rangoon; on September 14, two monks from Pakkoku and on the same day three monks from Mandalay were arrested by SPDC troops. According to the All Burma Young Monks' Union, seven Buddhist monks from Mandalay are missing or went into hiding after the demonstration on November 23, in Mandalay. They are Ashin Wilartha (Mya Taung monastery), Ashin Za Ninda (Khin Makan monastery), Ashin May Gida (Gwe Cho monastery), Ashin Wilartha (A Kauk monastery), Ashin Teza (Moe Kaung monastery), Ashin Zawti Parla (Moe Kaung monastery), and Shin Sandima (Moe Kaung monastery). The MI agents demanded the abbots of the monasteries in Mandalay hand over these monks for their participation in the demonstrations. No further information of their whereabouts is known.

Unknown numbers of monks were arrested across the country in 1998 including the following:

U Thumingla	30 years old	Teza Sakki monastery, Rangoon
U Nyanika	40 years old	Kyeikkasan monastery, Rangoon
U Tilawka	20 years old	Along Aung Mingla Teikthit monastery, Rangoon
U Ywathawa	28 years old	Phayagyi monastery, Mandalay
U Oaktama	20 years old	Masoeyin monastery, Mandalay
U Pathehta	23 years old	Shwekyin Withudayon monastery, Mandalay
U Zawtika	44 years old	Moulmein

U Authahta	Withudayon monastery, Kaba Aye, Rangoon
U Arsitna	Bangla monastery, Sanchaung, Rangoon
U Pyinya Dipa	Theinbyu monastery, Rangoon
U Panitta	28 years old Thayettaw monastery, Rangoon

At least 12 Buddhist monks were rounded up and three others sustained injuries after riot police broke up a demonstration on September 4, 1998 in Mandalay. They were from Pyayagyi, Mya Daung and Withudayon monasteries in Mandalay. (*Source: ABMYU*)

9.3.1 Treatment of Buddhist Monks in Detention

The persecution of monks and the desecration of monasteries and pagodas have continued unabated throughout Burma. There have been reliable reports of the torture of monks in prisons, and those released from prisons have reported seeing stacks of hundreds of monks' robes in the prisons, clear evidence that many monks are not only being detained, but also disrobed – an affront to any Buddhist monk.

The monks have asked that they be permitted to wear robes in prison, but prison authorities have taken them anyway and forced the monks to wear white prison uniforms. In addition, the monks are denied the use of their ordained names. They may only use their ordinary names.

9.3.2 Monks tortured and killed

On April 4, 1998, three soldiers at Taungzun village or Win Yay township, Karen State defected to the KNU. In connection with the defection of these three soldiers, the commander of LIB 357, Lt-Col. Aike Mon, acting in accordance with the directive of the commander of the No.1 Tactical Operation Colonel Ye Htut, issued an order for the arrest of two monks from a monastery in Taungzun village on the suspicion that they might have helped the soldiers escape. The two monks were arrested and taken to the Tactical Operation Command base in Taungzun. Back at the base, they were severely beaten, tortured and interrogated. One monk, Ashin U Kuthala, 31 years old, who had been a monk for eleven years, died of injuries caused by torture. The fate of the other monk remains unknown. (*Source: Yoma 3*)

9.4 SPDC's Disrespect for all Religions

At least one-third of Burma's population – about fifteen million people – is formed by ethnic minorities. In addition to the largest ethnic groups – the Mon, Karen, Shan, Kachin, Chin and Arakanese, within which there are dozens of sub-groups – there is also a significant population of immigrants of Chinese and South Asian origin. The ethnic minorities tend to have large Christian or Muslim minorities among them. The degree of integration among ethnic minorities differs greatly, but in general depends on geographic location: those minorities living in remote highland areas are least integrated and mostly Christian. The coincidence of ethnicity, religion, and armed opposition has meant that allegations of religious persecution and racial discrimination are often combined. Not only the Christians

but also Muslims have been denied the right to freedom of worship. Muslims in northern Arakan State cited religious persecution as one of the factors which drove them to seek refuge in Bangladesh in 1992 and in 1996. Mosques in the region were destroyed or otherwise closed down. Muslims children are not permitted to attend Madrasahs (Koranic schools). The SPDC has often tried to stir up religious and racial tensions in Burma in order to divide the population and divert attention away from other more pressing political and economic concerns.

95. Religious Discrimination against Christianity

Religious persecution is a major concern in Chin State, Karenni State, Kachin State and some parts of Karen State and Sagaing Division, where the majority of people are Christian. In Chin State particularly, over the past few years, the military has been forcing Christian villagers to build Buddhist pagodas in their villages. Soldiers have been desecrating churches and graveyards by turning them into army camps, disturbing religious ceremonies, and preventing evangelists from preaching.

9.5.1 Restrictions on Catholic Prayer Meetings

The SPDC's No.7 Tactical Command ordered the Roman Catholic community in Pe Khon, Shan State, not to organize any activities involving more than 10 people at a sacred religious site. On December 1, 1998, about 30 youths from Jayraw Blo village near Pe Khon village were prevented by Major Kyaw Soe from praying and cleaning at the Mother Mary sacred site on the hill. The soldiers stationed at the sacred site and the major told the youths that no praying or cleaning the site was allowed. On the next day, the SPDC authorities in Pe Khon called the religious leaders who were organizing a religious festival and told them that not more than 10 persons would be allowed to go up to the sacred site and conduct the prayer session or clear the site. They also ordered the religious leaders to submit the list of Christians from other areas who would come to the site and celebrate the festival. One leader requested to be allowed to bring more than 10 persons to pray at one time, but the authorities warned him that action would be taken if the leaders do not comply. When the festival started on December 3, 200 Christians who came from other areas to pray and celebrate the festival were only allowed to take part in the religious service at a ground in the village instead of at the sacred site. (*Source: ABSDF*)

9.5.2 Blocking centennial celebrations in Chin State

The SPDC harassed and blocked the centennial of Christianity in Chin State. Chin pastors were interrogated and the centennial celebrations in Haka, the capital of Chin State, have been postponed by the regime at least until April, 1999.

Chin Christians sought to celebrate their centennial of Christianity from January 1-3, 1999, at Thantlang, another town in Chin State. The centennial marks the arrivals of American missionaries Rev. Carson and his wife Laura Carson in 1899. On January 5, 1999, when the celebration in Thantlang was over, citizens of the town placed a centennial

memorial cross on the top of Vuichip Hill neat Thantlang. The SPDC authorities ordered the citizens of Thantlang to remove the cross they erected. After the citizens refused to remove the cross, soldiers pulled it down and destroyed it.

Six pastors from Thantlang, Rev. Thawng Kam, Rev. Biak Kam, Rev. Thatu, Rev. Tha Ceu, Rev. Cung Bik and Rev. Beauth Lily, were then taken away from the town and interrogated. In protest, all the citizens in Thantlang staged a general strike prayer service and fast at local churches or in their homes the following day, January 6, 1999. In retaliation, the military cut all telephone lines to Thantlang and summoned twenty pastors and church leaders for interrogation. On January 9, churches around Haka joined the protest by holding prayer services. Military officers from Haka told the leaders that if they wanted to put the memorial cross again, they would have to apply to the Home Ministry in Rangoon. The military has also ordered the postponement of centennial celebrations in Haka until April 1999.

9.6. Lists of incidents

◆ On January 20, 1998, Saw Leh Wah, a DKBA officer press-ganged 80 villagers of Tee Wa Plaw village in Pa-an district, Karen State, to build a pagoda on Hsweh Necho mountain top. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On January 24, 1998, Saw Htee Klo from No. 2 Battalion of DKBA Division 999, accused Par Kat villagers in Pa-an district, Karen State of having connections with the KNU. The DKBA troops burnt down the Christian church in the village later. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On March 5, 1998, a Christian villager from Ta Kae village, which is about two hours walk away from Seikkyi, Karen State, was taken to Kyon Sein village and killed. He was told to wear Buddhist saffron robes of a monk telling him that his life would be spared if he wore it. The villager refused and later he was shot in the chest and beheaded while still alive. (*Source: Yoma 3*)

◆ On March 7, 1998, military troops from LIB 284 came to Kasa village in Kya-inn-seik-kyi township, Karen State, and ordered the Christian pastor to destroy or burn the church outside the village. When the pastor did not obey the order, they threatened him with death. They warned the pastor that he would be killed if they found the church still existing when they came back on March 9, 1998. With no choice left, the villagers had to burn the church. (*Source: Yoma 3*)

◆ In May 1998, a Christian church and all the best looking houses in Hsaw Wah Der village, Taungoo district, Karen State, were burnt down by an SPDC column. This village had been ordered to move to Kler Lah several years ago, but had never obeyed. (*Source: KHRG*)



Buddhist monks Kawkareik township show all that is left of the valuables of their monastery after it was looted by Column 2 of the SPDC IB 2. The troops destroyed whatever they did not want to loot. (Photo by KHRG)



All that remains of Saw Wah Der village's Christian church, built by the villagers at a cost of 300,000 kyat and burned by LIB 707 on 29 June 1998.

10. Freedom of Opinion, Expression and the Press

10.1 Background

When Gen Ne Win came to power in 1962, all private magazines and newspapers were eventually shut down and editors, journalists and writers were thrown into jail as they were considered to be enemies of the state. In July 1962, the Revolutionary Council led by General Ne Win announced its intention to centralize the dissemination of official information, a decision which was soon implemented by the closure of all departmental journals and the publication in their place of a state-run newspaper, the *Working People's Daily*. Later, the Revolutionary Council decided to nationalize all private newspapers and bring them under the control of the Ministry of Information. The Printers and Publishers Registration Act 1962 made it obligatory for all printers and publishers to register with the government and to supply the government with certain specific information about themselves.

After the military coup in September 1988, the SLORC tightened the screws on free speech and strict censorship was re-imposed through a strengthened Press Scrutiny Board (PSB) which brooked no opposition to the military regime. Many leading dissident writers and journalists were arrested and imprisoned and a blacklist of "subversive" authors was drawn up; no one on this blacklist was to be allowed to publish any works. The SLORC also drew up a list of topics that were "off-limits" for discussion: these included: democracy; human rights; politics; the event of 1988; senior government officials; the BSPP; the Nobel Prize or anything that might bring Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to mind; criticism of the SLORC or of military personnel; 'immorality', such as references to two unmarried people living together; prostitution in Burma; and any other topics determined unsuitable by the PSB. In a further attempt to snuff out dissident, the PSB required every prospective publisher to submit with their manuscripts a declaration stating whether they had engaged in political activities or served a sentence of imprisonment. Those answering in the affirmative naturally ran a high risk of rejection of their requests to publish.

Now, with more restrictions, newspapers, journals and magazines are tightly controlled by the SPDC. The state-run newspapers, television and radio stations remain propaganda instruments. All forms of domestic media are officially controlled. While the English language daily, *New Light of Myanmar*, continues to include many edited international wire service reports of foreign news, domestic news has strictly to reinforce SPDC policies. These official media normally do not report opposing views but only criticize the opposition. Particularly in 1998, state media, both newspapers and radio, attacked Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her NLD party using indecent words.

Citizens are generally unable to subscribe directly to foreign publications, but a limited selection of foreign newspapers can be purchased in a few hotels and stores in Rangoon. People caught reading underground newspapers are severely punished.

The censorship law requires all publications, including movie scripts and song lyrics, to be reviewed by the authorities. Artists sometimes face a specific period of being

banned for their scripts and lyrics if they make the authorities feel uncomfortable. Editors and reporters remain answerable to the military authorities and are compelled to publish pro-SPDC articles in non-official media. A number of private publications on non-political issues are available to the public, but censors frequently ban issues or delete articles deemed unwelcome by the authorities.

In 1998, the authorities ordered publishers of weekly journals to include articles attacking Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Each journal has to include at least one article.

For the first time after 1962, in November 1998, the *Myanmar Morning Post* began it publishing in Rangoon in the Chinese language. This is the first time in 30 years that Burmese authorities allowed a newspaper in the Chinese language to be published. It was initially published on a weekly basis with a circulation of 5,000 every Wednesday.

10.2. Words of warning to the editors

In August, 1998, military intelligence summoned the editors of three magazines, namely, *Theit Bawa* (Your Life), *A Tway A Myin* (Perspective) and *Ya Nant Thit* (New Fragrance), to warn them to tone down their critical comments about educational affairs and the suffering of workers. They were also told not to write about western concepts or to discuss peoples' movements in other countries. If they did not obey these warnings, their magazines would be shut down.

Many authors were also warned to tone down their comments relating to the current situation or face being prohibited from writing articles for one year. Min Khai Soe San has been prohibited from writing for publications for three months, and Taya Minwai's forthcoming novel has been barred by the censorship board because of the recently tightened restrictions on literary circles. (*Source: ABSDF*)

10.3. SPDC's media: Tools to attack NLD and foreign countries

The New Light of Myanmar and *Mirror*, both English and Burmese publications, in 1998 repeatedly ran many articles and comments attacking Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as being outside the law and working with foreign backers to stir up "anarchy and unrest" in the country, and also condemned foreign embassies for "lending support to opposition parties."

On August 28, 1998, the SPDC's state-run media lashed out at foreign diplomats in Burma, accusing them of inciting unrest and lending support to opposition parties. "The code of conduct does not state that diplomats should make contacts with or give support to organizations opposing, criticising and attacking the government," a commentary in the *New Light of Myanmar* said. "Some embassies are one-sidedly favouring the National League for Democracy," it added, referring to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

The commentary urged diplomats to cease meddling in the military state's internal affairs, saying the junta's own foreign envoys set a good example for them to follow.

10.4. SPDC: Enemy of the press

SPDC leaders have been repeatedly named “one of the ten enemies of the press” by the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists. They have been condemned for their relentless hostility to the very concept of a free and independent press in their own country and around the world.

Burma has always been notorious among journalists as one of the most difficult countries in the world in which to work, especially when attempting to report on human rights issue. The country is basically closed to journalists, and as a result, lack of access to people and information is an overriding obstacle when reporting on events in Burma.

The country’s military authorities, known as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), rarely issue visas for journalists. Nowadays, these visas only seem to be available if the journalist is known to be pro-SPDC or if he or she is writing about business and/or military issues. Consequently, the only other way for journalists to enter Burma is under cover of a tourist visa. The military authorities describe this activity as “illegally gathering news”, and if discovered journalists are usually deported and banned from ever returning to Burma.

The political situation in Burma has been extremely tense since June 1998, and as a result the authorities have more closely monitored people entering the country, especially those with cameras and other related equipment that may identify them as a journalist. As a result, over the last few months Burma’s military authorities have deported at least five foreign journalists who entered the country on tourist visas and seized from them documents, cassette tapes, film and videotapes. In this same period, several other foreign journalists on tourist visas were detained and questioned by security forces.

■ On August 16, 1998, Belgium-based Italian journalist Maurizio Gioulano was refused entry to Burma after arriving in Rangoon airport. “He was found to have falsely stated his occupation as a student in his visa application. He was found to have failed to apply for the proper standard journalist visa,” said SPDC authorities.

■ On August 17, 1998, Philippe Grangereau, a French journalist working for the Paris-based *Liberation* newspaper was deported for allegedly trying to hide the fact that he was a journalist when he entered the country. The authorities searched him at the airport before his deportation; security officials found cassette tapes hidden in his underwear and political documents, according to the SPDC authorities.

■ On September 1, 1998, Douglas Earl, 41, a Canadian reporter of the Thaya Thai advertising company, Munesuke Yamamoto, 45, a Japanese working for the Pacific Press Service and Australian freelance journalist Sophie Louise Barry, 22, were deported from Rangoon for “gathering news in Rangoon and giving false statements about their true profession in their passports.”

10.5. SPDC’s laws restricting freedom of expression

The Printers and Publishers Registration Law 1962, has historically been the main instrument of official censorship, requiring all books, magazines, other periodicals, song lyrics, and motion picture scripts to be submitted for vetting by the government prior to

publication or, in some cases, prior to distribution. This law required printers and publishers to register with the government and to identify themselves in publications for which they were responsible.

The task of vetting publications under the 1962 Act was entrusted to the Press Scrutiny Board (PSB), a 30-member body answerable to the Ministry of Home and Religious Affairs. The PSB enjoys extensive powers, including the power to prohibit the publication of material submitted to it.

In 1975, the BSPP government, presumably in an attempt to lessen the uncertainties inherent in the system, issued a set of guidelines. These set out the broad parameters of censorship followed by the PSB. According to these guidelines, the following materials would not be tolerated:

- (a) anything detrimental to the Burmese socialist program;
- (b) anything detrimental to the ideology of the state;
- (c) anything detrimental to the socialist economy;
- (d) anything which might be harmful to national solidarity and unity;
- (e) anything which might be harmful to security, the rule of law, peace and public order;
- (f) any incorrect idea and opinions which do not accord with the times;
- (g) any descriptions which, though factually correct, are unsuitable because of the time or circumstances of their writing;
- (h) any obscene (pornographic) writing;
- (i) any writing which would encourage crimes and unnatural cruelty and violence;
- (j) any criticism of a non-constructive type of the work of government departments;
- (k) any libel or slander of any individuals.

The harshness of this law was enhanced by an amendment to the Printers and Publishers Registration Law, introduced in 1989, which increased the penalties that can be imposed on those convicted of breaching the law. Under this, anyone who failed to comply with any rules or regulations framed under the law could be imprisoned for up to seven years and fined up to 30,000 *kyat*.

Another law which has been frequently used by the military regime to stifle freedom of expression is the Official Secrets Act 1923, a pre-independence law which has been jettisoned even in its country of origin in favor of more liberal legislation. Under this Act, it is an offence, among other things, to possess, control, receive or communicate any document or information, the disclosure of which is likely to affect the sovereignty and integrity of the state or friendly relations with foreign states or otherwise be prejudicial to the safety of the state. It has been used against people who have passed on documents not so classified and which cannot reasonably be argued to be a threat to the national interest. The authorities enjoy an almost open-ended power to classify official information as “secret” under the Act, and no exception is made whatsoever for the disclosure of classified information on public interest grounds. Anyone convicted of an offence is liable to be punished with imprisonment for up to two years, or with a fine, or both.

The 1950 Emergency Provisions Act has been one of the most heavily used laws over the past half century. It allows up to seven years’ imprisonment for any person who “infringes upon the integrity, health, conduct, and respect of State military organizations and government employees, spreads false news about the government, or disrupts the

morality or the behavior of a group of people.” The law also makes it an offense, punishable with life in prison, to “intend to or to cause sabotage or hinder the successful functioning of the State military organizations and criminal investigative organizations.” This law is commonly used by the regime to carry out indiscriminate and arbitrary arrests and detain political opponents. Those currently or previously imprisoned under it include opposition politicians, monks and other clerics, students, writers and trade unionists. Despite not being a law exclusively aimed at suppressing freedom of expression, it has frequently been invoked towards that end, usually in conjunction with other media-directed laws such as the Printers and Publishers Registration Law and the Official Secrets Act.

1975 Law to Safeguard the State against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts (amended in 1991), allows the government to declare a state of emergency in a part or the whole of Burma “with a view to protect state sovereignty and security and public law and order from danger”, and to restrict any fundamental rights of the citizens in specified regions or all over the country. Although any state of emergency declared under this law has to be approved by the People’s Assembly within 60 days, it can be extended indefinitely by the Assembly.

Under the law, the Council of Ministers is authorized under section 7 of the Law to “pass an order, as may be necessary, restricting any fundamental right of a person if there are reasons to believe that any citizen has committed or is about to commit any act which infringes upon the sovereignty and security of the State or public peace and tranquility.” The law also stipulates, in Sections 13 and 14, the possibility to continue imposing restraint for “a period nor exceeding one year at a time up to a total of five years.” This State protection law has been applied extensively to suppress peaceful political dissidents; it was used to detain Daw Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest between July 1989 and July 1995.

A law issued on June 7, 1996, No. 5/96, allows prison sentences up to 20 years for anyone who expresses political views publicly. This law, entitled “Protection of the Stable, Peaceful, and Systematical Transfer of State Responsibility and the Successful Implementation of National Convention Tasks, Free from Disruption and Opposition,” prohibits, inter alia, the preparation or dissemination of speeches or statements that undermine the stability of the State or are critical of the SPDC, and prescribed up to 20 years’ imprisonment for persons violating the law; organizations taking part in such activities can be banned and have their funds and property confiscated. Harassment of NLD members and supporters was further stepped up under this law.

Under the 1980 Video Law, all videos must be submitted to the Video Censorship Board, controlled by the SPDC, for scrutiny. Any persons involved in the production, duplication, or distribution of videos are threatened with prison terms of up to three years under this law.

The new Television and Video Act, issued on July 31, 1996, required that: (a) foreign diplomat missions and United Nations Agencies obtain permission to show imported videos at “public exhibitions” and give government video censorship boards the right to ban, censor, or restrict the showing; (b) private videos operators obtain licenses from the Video Business Supervisory Committee which will be formed in all States and Divisions in the Union of Myanmar; and (c) all videos both imported and locally-produced, be approved by the Video Censorship Board. Violators of these provisions are subject up to three years

in prison and/or a fine of up to 100,000 *kyat*. The new law also forbids private transmitters that are not authorized by the government, prescribing up to five-year prison terms for offenders.

In 1998, the SPDC issued new rules requiring the licensing of all videocassette recorders and imposing new controls on the export and transport of video tapes. The regulations created a Video Censor Board and Video Business Central Supervisory Committee. The revisions to the Television and Video Law of July 1996 also required new licenses for all satellite receivers. Opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has repeatedly sent video tape messages from Rangoon on such occasions as International Human Rights Day. It is not clear whether the revised law would criminalize such actions.

Another law entitled “The Computer Science Development Law”, issued on September 27, 1996, makes the unauthorized import, possession, and use of certain types of computer equipment illegal. This law requires anyone who wishes to import, possess or use computer equipment, notably those with networking or communications facilities, to obtain a license from the Ministry of Communication, Posts and Telegraphs. It also requires those desirous of “setting a computer network or connection link inside the computer network” to apply for prior sanction to that Ministry. The Ministry is granted absolute power to grant or refuse licenses and sanctions and to impose such conditions as it may deem fit. The unauthorized use of computers with networking capabilities is punishable with sentence of between 7 and 15 years in prison and/or a fine. A “Myanmar Computer Science Council” will be established to decide which computer equipment should be restricted or banned. According to the government-controlled newspaper the *New Light of Myanmar*, the punishment will be meted out to anyone establishing links with a computer network without prior permission or who uses computer networks or information technology for undermining State security, law and order, national unity, the national economy, national culture, or who obtains or transmits State secrets. Members of unauthorized computer clubs may, according to reports, be sentenced to a minimum prison terms of three years. A punishment of between five and 10 years in prison is prescribed for anyone who imports or exports computer software or information banned by the Myanmar Computer Science Council.

10.6. Sentencing for conducting interview with BBC: the case of Daw San San



A leading member of the democracy movement in Burma, Daw San San, the NLD Seikkan township MP-elect and divisional vice-chairperson and NLD women’s leader, was arrested at midnight on October 28, 1997. She was detained under Section 10(a) of the law to safeguard the country from people who intend to disrupt and destroy it, and was given a 25 year prison sentence after being accused of distributing false information domestically and internationally and has been held without charge ever since. She was sentenced for conducting radio interviews with the BBC (British Broadcasting Service) and RFA (Radio Free Asia).

11. Freedom of Assembly and Association

11.1. Background

SLORC issued Order 2/88 on the day it assumed power which prohibits freedom of assembly and association. It states: (a) no one, without proper authorization, is permitted to travel on the street between 20.00 and 04.00; (b) gathering, walking, marching in processions, chanting slogans, delivering speeches, agitating, and creating disturbances on the streets by a group of five or more people is banned regardless of whether the act is with the intention of creating disturbance or of committing a crime or not; (c) no one is permitted to open strike centers regardless of whether or not the intent is to cause disturbances or commit a crime; (d) no one is permitted to block roads or to demonstrate en masse; (e) no one is to interfere with or to obstruct people carrying out security duties.

Section (e) of this Order was repealed in April 1992, when General Than Shwe came to power. But the other sections remain in place. While this law has not often been enforced, there are many other laws which have. The most frequently used law is the 1907 (1957) Unlawful Association Act which allows for the detention of up to three years of anyone who is a member of or assists in any way an unlawful association.

SLORC Order 1/91, promulgated on April 30, 1991, requires that the conduct of public service personnel remain clear of party politics. This orders prohibits public service personnel engaging in any party politics or providing financial assistance to or supporting by other means any political party, as well as also prohibiting their dependents or persons under their guardianship from taking a direct part in activities that are aimed at opposing the government, and they must not be party to any labor association, organization, union, and other like bodies not formed in accordance with the rules occasionally prescribed by the government.

11.2. Mounting pressure on NLD and its gatherings

Since late 1996, the SPDC has prohibited regular weekend gatherings in front of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's residence at which she and NLD vice-chairmen U Tin Oo and U Kyi Maung responded to letters from the public and delivered speeches.

Existing political parties are required to request formal permission from the SPDC to hold internal meetings of their members; however, the SPDC permitted several public gatherings of NLD members and supporters on various holidays. Those meetings continued through the year's end, although SPDC security forces were present. While the SPDC allowed celebrations to take place in Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's compound, police or riot police restricted the size of the gatherings, and their suspension of restrictions was sporadic. NLD members and their sympathizers were prevented from attending the gatherings. They are methodically arrested whether on their way to such meetings or after attending the gatherings. The SPDC enhanced the existing barriers that blocked access to her residence

during 1998, and severely restricted her freedom to leave her compound or to receive visitors.

February 12 Union Day celebration

Though, the SPDC permitted the NLD to hold a ceremony on February 12, 1998, to commemorate the Union Day, when the Panglong Agreement was signed in 1947 by ethnic minorities, more than 500 NLD members were unable to attend because of obstruction and harassment by SPDC Military Intelligence. Elected MP from outlying districts who came to Rangoon to attend the Union Day commemorative ceremony were blocked and harassed. The SPDC pushed back NLD members with their shields. Riot police threatened the NLD delegates who arrived at the corner of Saya San Road in Bahan township by saying: “Previously we sent you all back to place you could return from, but in future we will send you to a place from which you will not be able to return.” This means they will all be imprisoned. At a certain place in Rangoon, the riot police mockingly told the NLD delegates that they would be losing their human rights.

May 27 election victory celebration

The SPDC warned the NLD not to celebrate the anniversary of its landslide victory in the 1990 general elections. The NLD had been asked “to refrain from creating conditions that will unnecessarily cause a setback in the ongoing nation-rebuilding process.” Elected NLD MPs throughout the country had also reportedly been urged to “maintain stability and peace” by not marking the occasion. Hundreds of NLD members and supporters were arrested to keep them from attending the meeting.

However, the celebration was successfully organized at the NLD headquarters on May 27, without harassment by the authorities. More than 400 members of the NLD participated. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi thanked the SPDC for permitting the meeting but said it was not enough. “It is necessary to honor the results of the 1990 elections and hold the parliamentary session as soon as possible,” she said. A resolution demanding a parliament be convened by August 21, 1998 was passed.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s birthday on June 19

About 300 guests, mostly NLD members, came to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s residence on her birthday June 19 to wish her well. The arriving guests were not prevented from gathering by the SPDC, but were checked by soldiers posted outside her compound before they entered her home.

Forced rallies denouncing NLD and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

Since October, 1998, the SPDC has organized mass rallies known as “expressions of the people’s desire” over the whole country. Hundreds of thousands of people were forced to come to these meetings by local authorities. Most of the people are from a

government-sponsored organization, the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). The USDA has proposed the banning of the NLD because it is an unlawful association and also called for the deportation of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. People have no choice but to attend because to refuse attending means dismissal from their jobs and imprisonment for their sympathy for the NLD.

11.3. Suppression on the student-led peaceful demonstration

In addition to opposition politicians, students were also the target of deprivation of freedom of assembly. On August 24 1998, university students staged the first open street protests against the government since the 1996 demonstrations. The protesters gave out leaflets backing opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy's vow to convene a parliament. Later the demonstration was broken up by riot police. Dozens of students were rounded up by the authorities during and after the demonstration.

Again in September 1998, thousands of students protested against the SPDC in the biggest such demonstration for nearly two years, as political tensions boiled over on the campuses in Rangoon. The protest was initially triggered by student anger at arrangements for examinations for the previous two weeks, the first since universities were closed following unrest in December 1996. Like previous demonstrations, this was broken up by riot police and dozens more student demonstrators were rounded up and given long sentences in prison. They included the members of student-backed organizations, the All Burma Federation of Student Unions and the Democratic Party for New Society.

11.4. Freedom of association

Pressure on the NLD

The SPDC has continually refused to honor the election result in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) won more than 80 percent of the seats. The SLORC-backed National Unity Party (NUP) won just 10 seats.

Following the election, the SLORC began a systematic campaign of repression against members of parliament from the NLD and other opposition parties. This systematic pattern of repression is a blatant attempt by the military to invalidate the 1990 election result. In conjunction with this, the SPDC has sought to secure its own dominant role in the political sphere through the drafting of a new constitution through a National Convention, which is an unrepresentative and illegitimate body. Although the SPDC recognizes the NLD as a legal entity, the authorities prevented the party from conducting normal political activities. The junta has never declared the election results to be null and void as this would clearly encourage international criticism. Instead it has used methods involving obstruction, threats and intimidation, jail and torture, as these have allowed the junta quietly to eliminate elected MPs from the political sphere. Almost all NLD MPs have suffered many forms of intimidation at the hands of the military regime to prevent or discourage them from taking an active role in politics.

The SPDC has used a range of repressive and arbitrary laws to gain convictions

against NLD MPs and other pro-democracy supporters. Approximately 150 NLD MPs currently in prison were charged under one or more of these laws, all of which are in contravention of accepted standards of international civil and political rights.

The Election Commission has dismissed from parliament all those MPs who have been charged with an offence, and many are also banned from running in future elections. After the election in 1990, the NLD had 392 of the 485 seats. Since the election, 112 MPs have apparently been forced from office or dismissed by the Election Commission. This is more than a quarter, or 28 percent, of the 392 NLD MPs who were elected. About 150 MPs remain in detention following the election and three MPs U Tin Maung Win, U Hla Than and U Saw Win have died in prison. Furthermore, as a result of threats and intimidation from the SPDC, 20 opposition MPs, most of whom are from the NLD, have fled Burma.

Since November 1995, when the NLD leaders withdrew from the National Convention, there has been increasing harassment of the party by the SPDC, including arrests of hundreds of party members. The NLD MPs-elect, members NLD organizing committees at every level and ordinary NLD members have not only been subjected to illegal restraint, illegal arrest, held in unlawful custody, tortured and persecuted, but have also been falsely charged with offences and sentenced to long terms of rigorous imprisonment in jails. As part of this campaign the SPDC has banned political parties, forced MPs to resign from office, dismissed MPs from parliament, forced them into exile and even jailed and tortured them.

Massive arrest of the NLD MPs and supporters

The activities of the NLD remained severely restricted in 1998. The repression worsened greatly after May 1998 when the NLD declared its intention to call for the convening of parliament. The SPDC detained more than 900 NLD supporters including some 150 MPs to prevent the party from convening the parliament that was elected in 1990. It is difficult to detail lists of persons who have been arrested and who have been released, because a lot of those released were released with the understanding that they should not get in touch with the NLD headquarters, and a number of those taken into detention have been put into prison without trial. The SPDC claimed that the elected MPs and other NLD members were not arrested but were instead called for questioning and treated as guests in government guesthouses. People were kept in so-called "guesthouses" against their will or with the threat that their detention will continue unless they desist from political activities or abandon membership of the party or their seat in parliament.

11.5. Forced Resignation

Aside from the arbitrary arrests, NLD members have been subjected to intense and systematic harassment. The SPDC pressured many party offices throughout the country to close down and refused to recognize the legal political status of key NLD party leaders, its general secretary Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and the two party co-chairmen, and it severely constrained their activities through security measures and threats. A concerted effort was made by local authorities to remove all signs of an NLD presence on main roads or at any place where they might be exposed widely to the public. The most common ways in which

the military regime has harassed and intimidated NLD MPs and members into resigning are:

- (a) banning their right to education, medical care and the right to travel as well as that of their families;
- (b) blocking promotions, sacking NLD members and canceling the licenses of lawyers and doctors;
- (c) arresting and charging NLD members and MPs;
- (d) forcing NLD members in government service and MPs to repay government loans; and
- (e) evicting and threatening to confiscate NLD members' houses and land.

Since September 1998, members of the NLD have been constantly intimidated by local authorities as well as by the armed forces. Their houses are under constant surveillance. Many members of the NLD have been evicted from state owned apartments where they had lived for many years.

The SPDC and MI personnel applied improper methods of coercion and force on NLD members of township organizing committees. They not only closed the branches but also applied pressure to obtain the resignations of members of the NLD.

In the wards and villages, groups of civil servants led by Military Intelligence personnel enter every house to question the occupants about their attitude toward and relationship with the NLD. Individuals who favor the NLD and members of the NLD are forced to sign prepared resignation forms to swell the number of resignations. In the entire country (States, Divisions, townships, wards and villages) members of the NLD are being summoned to attend various offices and departments, or are being visited in their homes and being made to terminate their party membership. The form used contains blanks following the word "name", "registration number", "father's name", "address", "occupation", which have to be filled in. At the bottom, the following words have to be written and signed: "I am suffering from ill health and have no inclination to continue working in the NLD and ask that I be permitted to resign without reservation from the organization."

In the townships, branches of the NLD are being destroyed and extinguished, and forced resignations of members are being carried out by the Military Intelligence units accompanied by members of the multi-party election commission branch offices, and other civil servants. The harassment of the NLD and the pressure under which its members are living have led some of them to resign. Such resignations are publicized in the State-controlled media.

Irrawaddy Division

West Bassein township

From December 2, 1998, a MI group combined with ward authorities called at the homes of NLD members with printed resignation forms and forcibly obtained signatures from them.

One organizing NLD committee member was pressured to resign from the committee by sacking his schoolteacher wife from her job and by threatening that their children's education was in jeopardy.

One organizing committee member against whom action had been taken under

section 5 (j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions law was pressured and advised to resign from the NLD.

Danubyu township

On December 10, 1998, the chairman of Mukon village PDC in Sankin sub-township, Danubyu township, forced the members of the NLD organizing committee to put their signatures to prepared resignation forms. The same method was applied at Kyauktaing village tract.

Mawlamyaing-gyun township

Members of the NLD organizing committee in all villages in Mawlamaing-gyun township, Irrawaddy Division, were forced to put their signatures to prepared resignation forms by the village PDC authorities.

Deedayee township

The SPDC chairman of Kyone Kyat Payagyi Gone village tract forced the members of the NLD members in the village tract to put their signatures to prepared resignation forms.

In Kyonedachaung village tract, U Aye Thaung, the chairman of village tract PDC, forced the NLD members in the tract to put their signatures to prepared resignation forms.

Wakema township

In Sabayoe village, Wakema township, MI personnel, members of the police force and village authorities together forced the resignation of NLD members in the village.

In Shwe Laung sub-township of this township, NLD members faced the threat of having their children expelled from schools.

Magwe Division

Chauk township

The SPDC authorities are seeking resignations from NLD members by promising to hold special ceremonies for the occasion.

Mandalay Division

Pressure is being applied by the MI units to force the removal of signboards of the NLD organizing committee in Mandalay Division by intimidating the persons concerned.

Sint Kai township

On September 6, 1998, at about midnight, a joint group of MI, police and ward administrative PDC personnel damaged and destroyed the entrance gates and doors, fence and office buildings of the NLD in an attempt to arrest one NLD member. The group had no search or arrest warrants for the action that was conducted.

Madaya township

Pressure was applied to the NLD members from the villages of Taungpyonegyi, Luntan, Salay and Sedawgyi areas in the township. NLD members were forced to resign from the NLD.

Windwin township

Three members of the organizing committee of NLD in Windwin township were summoned to the township branch of the Multiparty General Election Commission and threatened, to make them resign from the party. Because they all refused to resign, they were again summoned on the December 5 and 8 and threatened. One of the three members did not respond to the summons. The secretary of the township administrative authority threatened to issue a warrant for his arrest.

On December 3, 1998 the chairman of the township organizing committee who had already resigned was again threatened by the MI and told to inform the NLD headquarters himself of this resignation. He declined to do so.

Pressure is being applied to NLD members in village tracts and wards of Windwin township area to resign from the party. They are being summoned by the authorities and forcibly made to resign with the threat that “when the NLD is declared an illegal organization, party members will be imprisoned.”

Kanma township

NLD members in the township were made to resign by signing on previously prepared forms.

Sagaing Division

Salingyi township

Between December 5 to 8, 1998, in Salingyi township, the district chairman of the Multiparty General Election Commission summoned the members of the NLD organizing committee and required them to resign from the NLD not later than December 8, 1998.

Monywa township

The chairman of the local SPDC issued a summons to the organizing committee for their attendance at his office without fail on November 3, 1998. He forced the NLD committee members to resign from the party and said he would take appropriate action against those who failed to do so. The members of the committee rejected the order to resign.

Myaing township

Members of the local SPDC and the USDA went to villages in the township and threatened the grassroots members of the NLD into resigning or else face trouble. Not only was pressure applied, but they were enticed with promises of advantages if they would “speak out and organize themselves to cause disenchantment against Daw Aung san Suu

Kyi.” Some of them were threatened with action under section 5 (j) of the 1950 Emergency Act if they did not resign.

11.6. No Free and Independent Trade Unions

Since 1962 when General Ne Win staged a coup, all democratic rights including freedom of association were denied. Unions were no longer considered legal entities. All independent labor unions were replaced with government-controlled worker associations.

Workers do not have the right to organize and bargain collectively to set wages and benefits. The SPDC’s Central Arbitration Board, which theoretically provides a means for settling major labor disputes, continues to exist on paper but in practice is dormant. The regime unilaterally set wages in the public sector. In the private sector, market forces set wages. The regime puts pressure on joint ventures not to pay salaries more than those employed by ministries or other high-level government employees. The minimum wage is insufficient to provide a decent standard of living for a worker with a family. In particular, the low level of remuneration of public employment fosters widespread corruption.

In 1955, Burma ratified ILO Convention No.87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize. However, workers in Burma do not enjoy the right to join organizations outside SLORC/SPDC’s existing structure. Furthermore, no Burmese organizations are permitted to join international federations or to affiliate with international organizations without SLORC/SPDC’s permission. Federation trade unions are not allowed to function in the country, and workers identified with the exiled Federation of Trade Unions, Burma (FTUB) are under constant surveillance by the police and the Military Intelligence making them live in permanent fear of arrest and torture.

The situation in Burma was examined by the ILO Committee for the Application of Standards at the eighty-fifth session of the ILO Conference held in July 1997 at Geneva. Regarding the application by Burma of ILO Convention No.87, the Committee took note of the statement of the Burmese representative indicating the SLORC/SPDC’s commitment to harmonize law and practice with the convention in promoting and protecting the legitimate rights of all workers. In March 1997, the governing body of the ILO decided to refer the complaint to a Commission of Inquiry chaired by Sir William Douglas (Barbados). The Commission’s mandate is to consider whether, and to what extent, the alleged violations exist or existed and to make any recommendations it deems appropriate. The Commission held its first meeting in June 1997 to establish its rules of procedure.

11.7 SPDC-run NGOs in Burma

The SPDC continues to use the Union of Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) to serve the interests of the authorities. It was first founded by the SLORC as a social and business organization. It has since also become the SPDC’s political support group and functions much like the Indonesian Golkar, terrorizing targets identified by the SPDC. Within two years of its formation in September 1993, the USDA’s membership had reportedly grown to 2.5 million, and is now more than 6 million. The USDA has branches in every state and division, and is represented in 90 percent of Burma’s wards and villages. Membership is open to anyone over the age of 10, “but the 11 to 25 year age group,

representing roughly one third of the population, is the focus of recruitment efforts.” High schools are fertile recruitment areas, and members of the military and the public service, who are prohibited from joining political parties, are “encouraged” to join. In fact, high school students are threatened with losing their places at school if they do not join. Once they join, they are subject to indoctrination. The USDA has been primarily used to attack violently senior members of the NLD, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and to damage and disrupt the activities of the NLD.

Since December 1995, the SLORC-controlled media has begun to report that mass rallies attended by tens of thousands of people throughout the country are being held in support of the USDA. According to inside sources, USDA membership is not voluntary; people join out of fear of the army. Attendance at USDA rallies is mandatory; in many cases people are fined if they do not attend required events. The USDA continued to hold large-scale rallies in support of SPDC policies in 1998. In September and October, large anti-NLD rallies were organized by the SPDC in every state and division; the authorities demanded that the respective regions, cities, and townships as well as different organizations provide a certain number of people to attend rallies.

Aside from officially sanctioned organizations like the USDA, the right of association existed only for organizations, including trade associations and professional bodies, permitted by law and duly registered with the SPDC, such as the Myanmar Women’s Entrepreneur Association. Only a few continue to exist, and even those are subject to direct intervention by the SPDC and take special care to act in accordance with SPDC policies. Such groups include apolitical organizations such as the Myanmar Red Cross and the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association.

Founded in 1949, Burma’s oldest non-governmental organization (NGO), the Myanmar Medical Association (MMA), began as a professional association. It currently boasts over 6,000 members, with 50 branches at the township or state/divisional levels. Consisting of physicians from both the public and private sectors, the MMA was pulled into the government’s orbit when senior BSPP officials in the Ministry of Health took up key leadership posts in its governing hierarchy. Today, many health workers feel that the MMA has yet to reestablish its independence under the present SPDC authorities.

The other NGOs, the Myanmar Red Cross (MRC) and the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA) have closer links with the government and Ministry of Health. With over 180,000 volunteer members, the MRC is supported by public donations and government funds and is supposed to have branches in each of the country’s 319 townships. The independence of the MRC is in question when SPDC Secretary-2 Gen. Tin Oo at a first aid kits donation ceremony on October 27, 1997 spoke of the aim of the Red Cross being to carry out relief tasks for the victims of natural disasters, and noted that one of the seven future tasks of the Red Cross was to train members to be ready to discharge duties as auxiliary forces for the maintenance of peace and tranquillity of the nation in addition to their primary duty of providing health care services.

Similarly, critics often question the MMCWA’s NGO status given its intimate association with the SPDC. Its joint general-secretary (a doctor) is the wife of the SPDC Secretary-1, Lt-Gen. Khin Nyunt; the president is the wife of Col. Pe Thein, the former Education minister; and the vice-president is the sister of the late Dr. Maung Maung, a leading BSPP functionary and, originally, one of the Ne Win’s chosen successors as party chairman.

12. Freedom of Movement

12.1 Background

All Burmese citizens are required to inform the authorities of their movements within the country. Under existing laws, any person not normally resident in a house who stays for one night or more must be registered at the local township LORC office. SLORC issued Order 1/90 on May 22, 1990 to remind people that "action will be taken against all those who fail to report people illegally residing in their home." It threatened to charge persons failing to do so under section 124 of the Criminal Code "for failing to disclose to the authorities concerned either an act or a conspiracy that amounts to high treason" and sentencing them to seven years' imprisonment, or three years' imprisonment under the Unlawful Association Act, section 17.1 or six months' imprisonment and a fine or both under section 22 of the Criminal Code for "failure to report crimes committed."

All residents in Burma have to carry identity cards, showing the citizenship status, normal place of residence, date of birth, name of father, and so on. The format of the identity card was changed in 1990 to include not only all of the above, but also of ethnicity and religion. All residents and citizens in Burma are required to apply for the new cards, without which it is illegal to buy a train or bus ticket, to register with a local council outside one's normal place of residence, and to vote in any future election. Only citizens carrying identity cards are free to travel within the country, which precludes movement by those unable to meet the restrictive provisions of the "citizen law." For example, it is virtually impossible for Muslims to move within Arakan State or to other parts of Burma from Arakan State. Rohingyas (Bengali-speaking Muslims) who would like to travel outside their villages must apply to the local SPDC authorities, which pass requests on to the nearest administrative base. The Immigration and Manpower Department, Police, Riot Police, Military Intelligence, and Customs Departments all have to agree to each individual's request. In most cases, passes are only granted for a twelve-hour period; only on rare occasions are Muslims permitted to stay outside their villages overnight. To travel further, for instance, to the township capitals at Maungdaw or Buthidaung or the state capital at Sittwe is virtually impossible.

Leaving the country legally requires the possession of a specific government authorization, which it is extremely difficult to obtain. The SPDC carefully scrutinizes all prospective travel abroad and rampant corruption results in many applicants having to pay bribes to obtain a passport or a document to which they are legally entitled. The application for exit visas and passports requires certificates of nationality and security clearance, which many citizens either do not possess or cannot obtain. All college graduates (except certain government employees) are required to pay a special education clearance fee to the SPDC authorities in order to obtain a passport. Passport applications are reviewed by a board and not with standing denials decisions appear to depend on political considerations. Since January 1996, the SPDC has begun restricting the issuance of passports to young, single, female applicants seeking work abroad. The new procedures are reportedly intended to

prevent young women from being enticed into the commercial sex industry abroad. Each time Burmese citizens come back to the country, they are required to surrender their passports to the authorities; a passport application must be submitted each time they want to travel outside the country.

Burmese embassies issue tourist visas, valid for one month, within 24 hours of application. However, selected categories of applicants, such as some human rights advocates and political figures, continue to be denied entry visas unless traveling under the aegis of a sponsor acceptable to the SPDC. More scrutiny and review has been conducted of visa applicants after 18 foreign activists were arrested for the peaceful distribution of democracy leaflets in August 1998 inside Burma.

Although some areas of the country remain off-limits to foreigners for security reasons, the authorities allow travel to most destinations. In some areas, tourists are allowed only to travel by plane or train and, in some places, prior permission is required.

12.2. Restriction of movement on the NLD MPs-elect

The NLD continue to be subject to intense and constant monitoring by the SPDC throughout 1998, aimed at restricting its activities and prohibiting its members from leaving their localities. Existing orders from the SPDC, including the 1961 Habitual Offenders Restrictions Act, preclude members of political parties from leaving their localities or their houses without prior permission from the authorities; otherwise they risk arrest and interrogation by the police or military intelligence agents. A number of NLD elected representatives have been arrested or charged under this Habitual Offenders Restriction Act. It is contended that the authorities have used the Act to restrict the activities of NLD-elected representatives in the Divisions. Starting from the night of June 25, 1998, elected NLD MPs in different parts of Burma, excluding Rangoon Division, have been restrained by township judicial authorities who act jointly with the police officials in those townships. All elected NLD representatives are required to stay within the confines of their respective municipalities for a year. They are said to have to report to the local police stations at least twice a day. Ward authorities have been ordered to visit the homes of a representative who reports sick to verify whether the claim is true. Those refusing to comply with the restraining order are threatened with arrest.

In the initial stage, in Pegu Division, military security personnel were involved in the implementation of the restraining orders on NLD elected representatives; in the other States and Divisions, only the township judges and the respective police station were involved. There had been a consistent pattern of elected NLD representatives being taken to their respective police stations and being held there overnight, and in some instances, for two nights. The NLD representatives would be allowed to take their own bedding, blankets and mosquito nets; the next morning, they would be released if two "guarantors" posted bond to the amount of 100,000 *Kyat* each. The township judge would then read out an order based on the Emergency Provisions Act, section 5, sub-section 1 (f) and (g), under which the elected NLD representatives would be required to "sign in" at the local police station every day. This practice is to prevent the individuals thus restrained from traveling outside their town's jurisdiction. Non-compliance with the restraining order would entail a prison sentence of one year. The NLD leadership has urged its elected representatives to defy the

restraining orders and as a result, a number of arrests have been made by the authorities. The total number of NLD representatives facing restrictions in the whole country now exceeds 50, as of the end of 1998. Such practices of restraining orders constitute a violation of the norms of basic international human rights, in particular those proclaimed in articles 9 and 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

12.3. Harassment of NLD's "reading session"

On June 25, 1998, security forces prevented four NLD representatives and 40 youths from entering Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Rangoon compound for a "reading session" regularly held at her home. They were pushed back to the junction of Kabe Aye Chedi Road and University Avenue. When they were informed of the incident, U Tin Oo, NLD vice-chairman, and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi went to the junction to lead the members back to their compound. After blocking them at various points, a man in civilian clothing ordered the security forces to attack the group. The police proceeded to do so, using batons and tree branches which were lying on the roadside. As a result, four young men around Daw Aung San Suu Kyi were severely beaten, and she herself was slightly injured. In protest at the refusal to allow the group's access to her compound, U Tin Oo and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi remained with the group, surrounded by security officers, throughout the night until they were finally allowed to enter her residence at 8:00 a.m. the following morning. The SPDC issued a statement the day after, saying that the group had refused legitimate orders to leave "on security grounds" but staged a sit-down protest overnight. They had been allowed to enter later. Officials had earlier denied that anyone was injured in the scuffle and said no arrests had been made. The road to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's compound remained sealed off for the next two days.

12.4. Restriction on the movements of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The SPDC progressively tightened the restrictions that it imposed in late 1996 on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's freedom to leave her Rangoon compound and her ability to receive visitors. On four occasions, the SPDC prevented Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from leaving Rangoon, which prompted confrontations that lasted several days. While two of the standoffs were resolved through negotiation, on one occasion security forces forced her to return to Rangoon. On another occasion she returned voluntarily, but only after her health had deteriorated dangerously when soldiers blocked her vehicle on the road for nearly two weeks to prevent her from peacefully visiting families of her detained supporters.

From mid-1998, the NLD leaders have sought to exercise their right to conduct normal political activities by visiting members and sympathizers of the party outside Rangoon.

On July 7, 1998, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD party chairman U Aung Shwe attempted to go to Min Hla township in Pegu Division, 147 km north of Rangoon, to meet a party member. They were stopped by the police 80 km from Rangoon and ordered to return home. Both leaders refused and staged an overnight sit-in protest in their car at Shwe Myaya village. The following day, the SPDC announced that it had allowed her to meet

with the NLD party member, Daw Hla Hla Moe. Arrangements were made to bring Daw Hla Hla Moe to Shwe Myaya village to meet with the NLD leaders on the morning of July 8. After the meeting, both parties returned home.

On July 20, 1998, the SPDC stopped a van carrying Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other people from going to the southern Pantanaw township, Irrawaddy Division, at Ainyarsuu village. After meeting Dr. Tin Min Htut, NLD MP from Pantanaw township under the auspices of the SPDC, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi returned back to Rangoon on the same day.

On July 24, 1998, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her party were stopped by local authorities about 80 km west of Rangoon as they attempted to drive to Bassein, 160 km west of the capital, to meet members of her political party. The authorities refused to let her proceed. However, she refused to return to Rangoon. As a result, she spent five days stuck in a car on a rural highway surrounded by security personnel. U Thein Win, U Soe Win, U Mahn Nyunt Thein, Daw Naw Ohn Hla, Daw Cho Cho Myint, Ko Khin Kyaw and Ko Hla Win, members of the NLD who went peacefully to visit their leader because they were concerned about her well-being, were all arrested. While Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and members of her party were staying at the blockaded site near Ainyasuu village on July 30, the authorities ordered the security forces to use force to remove the NLD representatives. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was physically forced into a car and driven back to her home without her consent. The authorities also drove the car belonging to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi back to her home without her consent. The remaining Central Executive Committee members and two other members of the party were also forced into cars belonging to the authorities and driven back.

On August 12, in another attempt to travel outside her residence to meet members of her political party in Bassein, 160 km west in the capital, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, together with U Hla Pe and a driver, were again stopped by the authorities at Ainyarsuu village, the same place as the previous stand-off. After spending 12 days on the spot, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and colleagues returned after her health had deteriorated dangerously.

The SPDC said the travel restrictions it had imposed on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi were for her own safety. It said it had banned her from going outside the capital, Rangoon, because she might be the target of an attack by Karen separatist guerrillas.



On July 29, 1998, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi waits in her car for a fifth day on a rural road outside Rangoon. The military junta has refused to let her travel to visit party supporters. (Photo by AFP)

13. Abuse of Women

13.1 Background

In January 1998, the SPDC-sponsored National Working Committee on Women's Affairs stated that "... Myanmar women have no need to demand their rights for they can enjoy their rights on equal terms with men." However, evidence to the contrary suggests that Burmese women have a very great need to demand their political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. Throughout history Burmese women have suffered discrimination. Society and tradition in Burma tend to denigrate the role of women. For example, although women constitute an estimated 40 per cent of the workforce, few women have ever been allowed to rise to top government positions. Gender discrimination also severely restricts women's rights to express their legitimate interest in social and political affairs. Women – particularly ethnic (non-Burman) women are extremely vulnerable under the SPDC regime.

Burma is a signatory to the 1952 UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Though the SPDC has made some token changes, establishing women's organizations and limiting some forms of violence against women, discrimination against women is still pervasive, and fundamental changes necessary to uplift the status of women and improve the human rights situation in general have not occurred.

There are many indicators of male dominance and female subordination throughout Burmese society. Women and girls are educated less frequently, leading to a higher literacy rate for men than women. Women also have less access to power and decreased ability to make and implement policy, as evidenced by the fact that relatively few women serve in important government positions. Women are frequently exploited sexually and economically, as demonstrated by a growing sex industry in Burma. Highly restrictive access to contraception and abortion means that women lack control over their reproductive health. Additionally, women are either excluded from the official workforces or relegated to low-paying, unskilled jobs in the national economy, as indicated by official statistics.

The SPDC has repeatedly denied all reports of human rights abuses against women by citing the existence of equal rights and five key laws which, it argues, prevent any such abuses from occurring: the Suppression of Prostitution Act (1949), the Myanmar Buddhist Women's Special Marriage and Succession Act (1954), the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Law, the Nursing and Maternity Law, and the Penal Code. SPDC consistently states that women in Burma have always shared equal status with men, making a women's movement in the country unnecessary. Indeed, women suffer equally, if not more. Despite SPDC's denial of the existence of human rights abuses against women in Burma, there has been overwhelming evidence of a disturbing pattern of grave human rights abuses and humanitarian neglect throughout Burma since 1988, in which women have been particular victims.

13.2. Women in politics

Burma signed the UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1954, and under this convention, women are guaranteed equal rights with men. However, like many other social and political protocols approved by governments in Burma, such declarations of intent conceal a very different social reality. General Ne Win staged a military coup in 1962 by overthrowing the elected parliamentary government. Since then, the military has controlled the entire nation, and both political and administrative sectors are monopolized by current or former military officers. Despite the theoretical equality Burmese women are supposed to enjoy, few have ever reached senior positions. In the “People Assembly” of General Ne Win’s government there were a few women representatives, but they were not elected by the people. They were instead selected by the central administrative system. These women did not have a chance to express their opinion and views in the assembly. They had to act and speak under the pre-planned programs and no criticism was allowed.

Under the present military regime, women’s political and social rights are still denied. Besides, those who confront the political system and fight for human rights are treated just as harshly as men. Many of the hundreds of thousands of women who joined the democracy movement were arrested and reportedly killed by the security forces. Today, women who become politically active, by expressing their opinion in favor of human rights or simply by aligning themselves with a particular political party, are systematically discriminated against and harassed. A number of women have been imprisoned with long sentences in Burma for their political beliefs and activities. Many have been harassed, interrogated and detained from time to time because of their family members’ involvement in politics.

Concerning women rights, the SPDC has claimed “As women in Myanmar have been enjoying their full rights, no special arrangements will be necessary . . . Myanmar women have been enjoying equal rights since the beginning of its civilization thousands of years ago. With the development of civilization, the role of women has also been enhanced. In accordance with Myanmar cultural traditions handed down since the time of our ancestors, Myanmar women are under no restrictions, enjoying equal status and equal rights.” But the SPDC’s chronic hatred of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is the unmistakable sign of discrimination against Burmese women in politics and inequality with men. The main intention of SPDC towards Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is not to let her be involved in politics in future in Burma. From a very early stage, the SPDC attempted several times to defame her so that she would not be involved in politics. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been physically attacked by the SPDC-sponsored group USDA. Slandorous statements by the SPDC are routine and her ability to move freely is severely restricted. These kinds of restrictions on and harassment of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi are clear evidence of the violations of both “Convention on the Political Rights of Women” and “Convention on the All Forms of Discrimination against Women.”

A number of well-known women political prisoners remain in detention and more women politicians have been arrested and sentenced to long term imprisonment in 1998. (Please see details in Chapter 2) The treatment and health conditions of women political prisoners are of great concern because many abuses against women prisoners take place and health problems are common in Burma’s prisons. Female prisoners are usually mistreated

and their health ignored. The testimony from former women prisoners states that a number of them were forced to give birth in their cells without medical assistance.

13.3. Partial lists of women political prisoners arrested in 1998

◆ On February 8, while Nan Khin Htwe Myint, elected NLD representative from Pagan, was on her way to Rangoon to attend the Union Day celebrations held by the National League for Democracy, the car she was traveling in was stopped and searched at the Thaton checkpoint. After the search, noticing that some parts of her traditional Karen dress was missing, Nan Khin Htwe Myint raised the matter with the personnel who conducted the search. The search party charged her with obstructing the function of officials. The following day, the court sentenced Nan Khin Htwe Myint to two years' imprisonment for disturbing public servants on duty and was sent to Moulmein Prison immediately to serve her sentence. (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ In late February 1998, Suu Suu Win and Khin Moe Aye, both female students, were arrested along with Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw and two other ethnic leaders U Tha Ban and Khun Sai. All five were accused of supplying historical background and other information to student leader Aung Htun who wrote a history of the Burmese student movement. In April the military regime sentenced the two female student leaders to seven-year prison terms for allegedly assisting a student historian in his work to write a history of the Burmese student movement. All were charged under Section 5(j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act and under Section 17 (20) of the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Act. Three men were sentenced to ten years imprisonment. All five were refused access to legal counsel. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ In the first week of April, Daw San San, elected NLD MP from Seikkan township, Rangoon and vice-chairman of the NLD Rangoon Division organizing committee was given twenty-five years imprisonment sentence after being accused of distributing false information domestically and internationally. She was arrested in October 28, 1997 and has been held without charge. She was sentenced for conducting radio interviews with the BBC (British Broadcasting Service) and RFA (Radio Free Asia). (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ During May and June 1998, the following leaders of DPNS on Mandalay Division were arrested and charged with prison terms of seven years and more: Ko Nyein Chan, Ko Yar Kyaw, Ma Thida and Ma Ommar. (*Source: DPNS*)

◆ In August, 1998, Ma Ni, a female member of DPNS was arrested along with Ko Aye Ko, Tin Ko Aung, Min Naing and Kyaw Soe, all are members of DPNS in upper Burma. (*Source: DPNS*)

◆ On August 12, 1998, Naw Ohn Hla, Daw Cho Cho Myint, Ko Khin Kyaw and Ko Hla Win, all members of the NLD who went to visit Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in her car stranded at Anyasuu village, Htantabin township, Rangoon Division, were arrested by the SPDC. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On September 6, 1998, Daw Myint Myint Aye, female secretary of the organizing committee, Mandalay Division, and Dr. Thein Lwin, chairman of the Meikhtila township organizing committee and MP elect, were arrested. (*Source: Inside Burma*)

◆ On September 11, 1998, Ma Mi Mi Khaing, a member of NLD Youth Central Supporting Group, was arrested on her way home. She dropped by at her friend's house on

the day of arrest and after she left, MI officers forcibly arrested her on Mandalay Road, in Northern New Dagon town, Rangoon Division. The MI officers led by Sergeant Tun Sein blocked the whole road and arrested her. She was later handed over to Rangoon Eastern Military Command. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)

◆ On September 14, 1998, Ma Khin San Yee from Mingla Taung Nyunt township, Rangoon Division was found with the NLD documents at her room at the guest house in Magwe. She was arrested and charged with Emergency Act 5(j). (**Source: *HRDU***)

◆ On September 21, 1998, the MI tried to arrest Ma Cho Cho and Ma Khin Khin Hlaing, both members of the Youth Wing, Thaketa township, Rangoon Division, at the bus stand in Shwedondine township, Rangoon. They escaped and the MI surrounded the residence of these two young girls at night. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)

◆ On September 22, 1998, Daw Sandi Win, in charge of Magwe Division NLD women's affairs, was arrested and charged with the Emergency Act 5(j). (**Source: *HRDU***)

◆ On September 24, 1998, NLD member Ma Hnin May Aung from Thingangyun township, Rangoon Division, was arrested and taken into custody by a team consisting of MI, police and ward leaders. Two video cameramen were present at the time of arrest. When she asked to see the warrant, they replied "no warrant is necessary because this is not an opium case. The presence of the ward elders is sufficient. You can go and report us to whoever you like." They ransacked the house and seized whatever papers they found. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)

◆ On the night of September 29, 1998, one member from the NLD central women group and twelve other organizing committee members were arrested. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)

13.4. Women and forced labor

Loke-are-pay is a Burmese expression that is often rendered in English a "voluntary labor", but in reality it means "forced labor" which has been endemic in Burma in recent years. An increasing number of women, including young girls, those who are pregnant and aged, have been forced to work on SPDC infrastructure projects as well as porters in ethnic war zones. Hundred have died from beatings, exhaustion, accidents and lack of medical care.

In this forced labor for infrastructure projects across the country, women are also conscripted as unpaid laborers regardless of their gender. Many of the worse human rights abuses against women, including beatings, murder and rape, have taken place while they have been engaged in forced labor duties in military bases or in the forced labor work-sites. In the name of so-called development programs, women and young girls are not spared forced recruitment into what amounts to slave labor. They toil at public works, for infrastructure and on more specific "tourism promotion" projects.

The SPDC has continued its widespread use of porters to carry military supplies, stand on sentry duty, build and maintain army camps, and act as human minesweepers. The SPDC has no qualms about using women for such jobs. While the SPDC battalions generally prefer male porters because they can carry heavier loads, some battalions deliberately demand or capture women porters in order to provide captive rape victims. SPDC soldiers generally select unmarried girls under the age of 18 for "porter duty." Women are considered more

versatile and useful to these battalions. They can be employed as porters, human shields, property to be sold, and, of course, for sexual entertainment for the soldiers.

When these young girls are finally permitted to return home, they often discover they are pregnant. Many attempts to abort by using primitive methods are sometimes fatal. Despite the fact that the girls are violently raped and humiliated against their will, cultural norms require secrecy in the decision to abort; they fear that if the villagers learn that they have been raped, they will be unable to get a husband.

Even women with small infants are forced to report for portering duties. In some cases, a woman porter can be seen carrying a baby on her chest and a heavy load of mortar shells on her back. In other case, soldiers order women to leave their infants behind in the village, where they must hope that other villagers will care for them. As part of portering duties, women with infants must also report for rotating shifts of usually three to seven days, building and maintaining army camps, cooking, cleaning, doing errands for soldiers, and standing sentry. Such duties are rotated among families. If a family cannot provide an able-bodied adult in its turns, a child must report for duty. In conflict areas, able-bodied men are often afraid to report for duty because the soldiers often accuse the men of being rebels and then torture or execute them at will. In these cases, women or girls are sent to replace the men. SPDC soldiers use women and children to sweep roads for landmines each morning before they attempt to use the road. The soldiers hope that their use of women and children will dissuade nearby villagers from supporting any opposition groups. Often SPDC soldiers will force a large number of children ride along the road in an army truck or a bullock cart and search for landmines.

13.5. Rape and sexual violence by the military

Rape in war zones has been outlawed by the UN Geneva Convention and many other international rules; however, women from Burma remain unprotected by the SPDC; rape and sexual exploitation at the hands of SPDC soldiers is a common occurrence for women in Burma. Women are subjected to rape and other sexual assaults in a variety of contexts: in their villages and fields; during flights; while they are serving as forced laborers or forced porters; and under assorted pretexts in which soldiers abuse their authority and claim to be checking women's documents. Women are raped by SPDC soldiers in their own homes, while they are internally displaced, and while they are on their way to seek asylum in neighboring countries.

Women in the war zone often experience systematic rape and are being forced to perform humiliating and degrading acts in public or in front of members of the community and their family. They experience such things within the context of being a target of the occupying forces, the SPDC army, who see them as a means of humiliating the enemy, terrorizing them and using them as part of their war tactics. Rape has been used as one of the deliberate strategies of genocide against the ethnic members. Not only has the SPDC been unable to provide the ethnic women of Burma adequate protection against violence by the armed forces, but also military system itself fosters extreme abuses.

Women porters or women being temporarily held hostage have been raped by soldiers in the frontier areas and on military bases. Local women are raped during their forced labor duty on SPDC's development projects or at their places of work. Women who

fled to Thailand to escape the situation in Burma are still not guaranteed safety. Some women are raped during the deportation process back to Burma or right after they are forced back to the country.

Testimony from women indicates that rape is a widespread form of torture. Police and Military Intelligence officials use rape and sexual harassment to torture women when they detain and interrogate them. These law enforcement officials use various forms of torture such as rape and sexual abuse to extract information from women detainees.

13.6. Incidents of rape and sexual assault by the military

13.6.1. The situation of refugee women

Ethnic minority groups in Burma are often caught up in the SPDC's counter insurgency efforts against armed ethnic groups who have been seeking autonomy since the end of British rule in 1949. The SPDC has undertaken forced relocation in ethnic areas for a variety of political, military and economic reasons: to assert control over ethnic nationalities; to create "free-fire zones" under the "Four Cuts" policy of cutting sources of food, arms, intelligence, and recruits between civilian communities and opposition groups; to clear the way for infrastructure development projects. During the offensive against the ethnic armed groups, SPDC soldiers commit atrocities such as rape, extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, torture, beatings, and forced portering. As a result of these human rights violations (combined with severe economic difficulties, caused in part by the SPDC's arbitrary tax policies), hundreds of thousands of people have sought refuge in neighboring countries.

Refugees from Burma number around 161,000 in Thailand and 200,000 in Bangladesh. Large numbers of refugees are also in the borders with China and Indian border. It is estimated there are a further one million internally displaced persons inside Burma. More than 80 percent of refugees from Burma are women and their children. Unfortunately, these vulnerable refugees often face further persecution in supposed safe-haven neighboring countries. Refugee women often face the insecurity in the refugee camps due to attacks or threat of attacks on refugee camps by SPDC troops and SPDC-backed armed groups. In March 1998, there were a number of attacks on Huay Kalo, Maw Kel and Mae La camps in Thailand by the DKBA an SPDC sponsored group in which a number of refugees were killed and hundreds more were injured.

There is no doubt that refugee women, particularly those on their own, are more vulnerable to exploitation and deprivation of rights at every stage of flight, than are refugee men. In Thailand particularly, refugee women often suffer abuses which are in violation of international standards established by the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. However, Thailand is not a party to the UN Convention; in fact, no one entering Thailand illegally from Burma is permitted to apply for asylum. As a result, there is no permanent international presence within the refugee camps, leaving the refugees, especially women, vulnerable to sexual abuse by the Thai Border Patrol Police and other authorities concerned. Thai authorities have agreed with the UNHCR's involvement in the protection of Burmese refugees along the border; however, it is not clear yet how the UNHCR will be involved and the degree of protection it can offer.

13.6.2. Burmese women migrant workers in Thailand

In recent years, dramatic increase in human rights abuses forced many young men and women to leave Burma in search of a better life. The human rights violations committed by the SPDC, the prolonged civil war waged in ethnic areas, and systematic economic mismanagement by the regime, continue to devastate communities through Burma. These abuses continue to destroy people's lives and are thus central considerations for women when making their decision to migrate to Thailand. Originally, Burmese people saw Thailand simply as a place of refuge, but the previously booming economy in Thailand also attracted them for potential employment. Many are people who have fallen through the refugee camp safety nets along the Thai-Burma border, who have been trafficked and who work under conditions of debt bondage. Currently there are at least one million undocumented Burmese migrants living and working in Thailand.

In Thailand at least half the undocumented Burmese population are women working in the manufacturing, sex and entertainment, domestic services and construction industries, far below official minimum wage limits and predominantly, under situations of debt bondage.

With little knowledge of the country to which they are moving, its language and its laws, as well as with no country of origin to take responsibility for them, Burmese women have little or no power to bargain, make requests, or to extricate themselves from situations that they did not anticipate or want. The degree to which others can exploit this vulnerability depends to a large extent on the power and information that migrants have to protect themselves. The ability to protect oneself depends partly on understanding immigration laws, the labor laws, and the laws regarding prostitution.

13.6.3. Burmese women sex workers in Thailand

In an effort to escape the dire economic and social situation in Burma, many young women flee to Thailand for jobs. Many women have been exploited and forced into the sex trade. However, those women who temporarily escape the sex trade and find a legitimate job are often lured into it by the prospect of making big money. The number of young girls from Burma who have been induced or coerced into working as sex workers in Thailand is unknown, but an estimated number of Burmese girls and women working in sex industry in Thailand is approximately 50,000.

Most of the girls trafficked in Thailand are from poor rural families and were lured from Burma with promises of jobs in factories or as domestic workers. The girls travel to the border, accompanied by a relative or companion, and meet a Thai agent who pays the relative/companion between \$400 and \$800. From there the girls are taken to brothels and are effectively indebted to the brothel owner, and must work until they pay off both the price paid for them as well as the agent's cut, plus interest.

There foreign girls and women working in the sex industry in Thailand are violated in a number of ways, regardless of how they were recruited. Traffickers, clients, and Thai government officials abuse them physically, verbally, and sexually. These women are subjected to debt bondage, illegal confinement, and risk HIV infection.

The girls are generally prevented from leaving the brothels. If they do manage to escape, they are often too ashamed to return to Burma. They have not heard of AIDS and

are not aware that the use of condoms prevents the spread of HIV. Language barriers exacerbate the problem. If they manage to return home, they have few real options, and as a result often re-enter the profession by opening or working in brothels in Burma.

Burmese sex workers who are “rescued” in police raids are often detained by Thai authorities on immigration charges and are held for months in detention centers where they face further abuses. From detention, they are deported to Burma, where again they face arrest under Burma’s immigration laws for having left the country illegally and risk being held at Rangoon’s infamous Insein Prison.

Burmese and Thai authorities have attempted to coordinate their efforts to prevent the trafficking of women and children. One such measure has been to deny single women visas to neighboring countries. However, this is discriminatory and fairly ineffective anyway because most women are able to cross the border without interference. So far, Burma has signed but not ratified the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Person and the Exploitation of Prostitutes and Others.

13.6.4. Burmese women and HIV/AIDS

Women in Burma are at risk because of the failure of the SPDC to provide adequate health care facilities and education. Despite the recent flurry of “development” in Burma, little attention has been paid to the hospitals, schools, or social welfare and educational facilities, especially in grossly underdeveloped rural areas. While the number of HIV-infected individuals continue to rise in Burma, the general public remains woefully uninformed about the risks, protection and education. Women particularly suffer greatly from the lack of special attention and public education.

Prostitution and the risk of HIV are widespread, yet the SPDC-controlled media does not supply adequate public health information to the populace in any systematic way. The SPDC’s widespread restrictions on the media, freedom of expression, and the right to community participation are some of the main obstacles that Burmese must overcome to acquire information on even the most basic health care questions. Moreover, traditional mores in this conservative largely Buddhist country conspire with SPDC’s repressive nature to prevent prostitution and the sex trade the primary reason for the spread of HIV/AIDS from being publicly acknowledged.

Obviously, stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases is closely linked with ending the spread of prostitution and the allure of the sex-trade. However, even if women were well-informed of the effects of HIV, there remained compelling reasons for them to enter the sex trade or begin a career of prostitution. Economic upheaval and ethnic warfare in Burma create a powerful incentive for women, even young girls, to earn money to support their families.

The number of Burmese women working in prostitution in Thailand and Burma continues to rise. Health officials estimate that women constitute at least one-third of all cases of HIV-infection in Burma, according to a report by Southeast Asian Information Network, a NGO based in Thailand. Other reasons for the high incidence of HIV among Burmese women are the country’s poor medical facilities, including unhygienic injections and the frequent need for blood transfusions after childbirth due to anemia or poor prenatal care.

Under the 1949 Prostitution Suppression Act, four training schools, with a capacity for up to 600 former sex workers, were established in Rangoon, Mandalay, Mergui, and Kengtung under the Department of Social Welfare. Women attending these schools were chosen for some of the first HIV-testing programs in Burma. In 1994, UNICEF interviewed 78 residents in one training school; 70 percent had sexually-transmitted diseases and 8 percent were HIV-positive. Not surprisingly, 98 percent had no knowledge of AIDS or how it could be prevented, according to the UNICEF report.

While the number of active commercial sex workers has increased dramatically in response to social and economic upheavals since 1988, it is nearly impossible to estimate accurately the number of young women involved. Some young girls are forced to enter prostitution to support their families, while others have taken it up while trying to eke out a living on the streets. However, much of the sex trade is covert and therefore difficult to analyse; girls as young as 12, under the control of pimps, frequently move among different houses to work or are brought directly to a “client’s” home at night.

13.7. Rape of Women List

◆ On January 18, 1998, eighty soldiers from IN 66, led by deputy commander Htun Myint arrested eleven villagers including five women who were clearing forest to prepare the land for rice cultivation. All of them were from Ho Lin village, Murg Pan township, Shan State. The soldiers kept the men and women in separate places. They tied the men to the trees for two days and nights while the officers raped the women. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On January 25, 1998, Major Aye Ko of LIB 517 arrested Loong Zarng Thun, aged 35, and Nang Zarng Sai, aged 36, of Huay Wawn village, Phawng Seng tract, Loi Lem township, Shan State. At night the troops gang-raped Nang Zarng Sai and killed the couple on the next day. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On January 28, 1998, troops from LIB 515 led by Major Soe Phyu arrived at Mawk Zarm village, Nam Pa Luk tract, Murg Kerng township, Shan State. They went to the village headman’s house and ordered him to gather 20 villagers to serve as porters. The commander also ordered the headman’s wife to look for a guide. When only the daughter of the headman, Nang Zing Yunt, aged 17, was left, Major Soe Phyu raped her in her bedroom. When the headman came back and found out about the rape, he struck Major Soe Phyu with firewood on the head. The soldier shot the headman dead and also shot Nang Zing Yunt. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On January 29, 1998, a military column from LIB 308 led by commander Lt-Col. Ngwe Thein arrived at Baw Naw Khee village in Belin township, Mon State. The soldiers shot at U Tin Aung while he was hiding in his farm hut wounding him in his shoulder. The soldiers rounded up his wife Daw Ma Kyi and her sisters Naw Mu, 32 year-old and Daw Dah, 28-year-old. They were taken away and released on February 3. All of them were repeatedly raped during their detention. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On February 1, 1998, Captain Han Sein from Murg Sart based IN 49 raped Nang Kyar Oo, aged 18 from Murg Sart town at her village house while her parents were in their fields. Although she informed to the community leader about the rape and the leader complained to the battalion commander, no action was taken against Captain Han Sein. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On February 6, 1998 in Tee Saw Ku village of Shadaw township, Karenni State, two sisters named Na Meh, aged 15, and Su Meh, aged 14, were going to their fields in the forest together with their younger brother. They met troops from SPDC IB 54 based in Loikaw. The soldiers tied up the small boy, then raped the two girls throughout one day and one night but did not kill them. (*Source: KNWO*)

◆ On April 8, 1998 at 1 p.m. in Ku Baw Deh village in Mae Se township, southeastern Karenni State, Naw Mu Kreh, aged 28, was found in the forest by troops from LIB 423, who raped **and then killed her**. (*Source: KNWO*)

◆ On April 11, 1998 at 3:30 p.m., the troops from LIB 423 found and raped Ywa Hay Mu, aged 23, in Ku Baw Deh village. They also raped and killed Pweh Ko Tah Mu, aged 9. Naw Tah Lu, aged 24, was raped and killed by Colonel Min Din, commander of LIB 423. All three women were from Ku Baw Deh village, Mae Se township, southern Karenni State. (*Source: KNWO*)

◆ On May 11, 1998, Nang Zarm Hawm, aged 14, was repeatedly raped and then burnt alive in her farm hut some 6 km east of Laikha township, Shan State, by Major Myint Than. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On May 18, 1994, Nang Kham. Aged 20, and Nang Lu, aged 17 from Na Loi village, Nang Oom, aged 16 and Nang La Koi, aged 16, from Wan Loi village, Loi Khio village tract, Murng nai township, Shan State, were raped and murdered by troops from IB 225. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On June 6, 1998, troops from IB 273 came to Kyon Kanya and Khawza Chaungwa villages in Ye township, Mon State and forced the villagers to gather. Then they singled out 29 people including three women. All were taken to Magyi village by boat and interrogated about the activities of an armed group in the area. During the interrogation, one of the women, Mi Tin Nin, was gang-raped by the soldiers. (*Source: MIS*)

◆ On June 25, 1998, a patrol troops of LIB 517 arrested a group of villagers who were working on a farm in Phawng Seng track, Laikha township, Shan State. Two women from the group, named Nang Nu, aged 20, and Nang Zum, aged 18, were singled out and accused of being wives of ethnic armed soldiers. They were later gang-raped by the soldiers. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On July 15, 1998, three women from Nar Kharn village, Murng Nai township, Shan State, were raped and killed, together with one man from the same village, by troops from LIB 524 led by Commander Khing Hla Win. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On July 17, 1998, Commander Han Aung of Laikha-based LIB 515, raped Nang Mya Non, 28, a married woman from the outermost quarter of Laikha town, Shan State. She reported the case to the village headman, but the rapist denied it and shot her dead instead. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On July 20, 1998, Aung Myint Sein, No 3 company commander from IB 230, seized Saw Par Ker's daughter, Naw Paw Lu Htoo, aged 16, of Tapaw village, Nyaunglebin district, Pegu Division and raped her. After the rape, he shot her dead with his carbine through her private parts. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ On July 25, 1998, Major Thein Oo and his troops from LIB 515 raped Nang Zarm, aged 16, from Zaet Lawk village, Laikha township, Shan State. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On July 27, 1998, Major Thein Oo and his troops from LIB 515 also raped Nang Nu, aged 13, until she fainted. She was from Phawng Seng village, Laikha township, Shan State. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On August 1, 1998, troops from LIB 515 led by Commander Thein Aung and his troops raped Nang Zarm Hawn, aged 14, and Nang Thuay, aged 14, from Zaet lawk village, Laikha township, Shan State. On August 17, 1998, Corporal Zaw Latt and Privates Maung Soe, Win Naing and Than Htike from Division 1, LIB 546 came to Win Gyi village, Kawkareik township, Karen State. They all went to house of Ma Myint Khaing, a married woman who had given birth two days earlier and tied up her husband's hands. They did not give any reason. Both Ma Myint Khaing and her mother Daw Sein Aye, 51 years old were raped in the house by all the soldiers. Ma Myint Khaing suffered from mental disorder after the gang-rape and was sent to Kyonedoe Hospital. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On August 10, 1998, five women were gang-raped by the troops from LIB 524 led by commander Khin Maung at a farm 7 km east of Kunhing town, Shan State. They were captured with four men in their fields when the troops arrived. The women were separated from the men and were raped the whole night by the soldiers. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On August 14, 1998, Aye Oot, a 14 year- old sixth grade student was raped by Corporal Naing Htay from LIB 324 at Murng Yaen village, Namtu township, Shan State. She was on her way back from school when she was raped. Her parents complained about this to an officer, but no action was taken against the rapist. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On August 17, 1998, Major Tin Aye and other four soldiers from LIB 546 based in Kyondoe, Karen State, came to No Phardoe village in Kawkareik township, Karen State. They raped Daw Wah Say and another unknown woman from the village. They later stabbed and killed Saw Doe, husband of Naw Wah Sat. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On August 19, 1998, Captain Shwe Nyunt, commander of company 2 of IB 65 in Murng Ton, raped Nang Zing Yo, aged 17, in a farm hut in Nar Pa Kao village, Murng Ton township, Shan State. She reported the case to the authorities but no action was taken. She was later fined 5,000 kyat for defamation. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On October 14, 1998, Nang Lam, a seven- month pregnant woman from Nam Hoo village, Nam Zarng township, Shan State, was beaten and her sister Nang Zu was beaten, raped and robbed by troops from IB 22 led by commander Than Nyunt at a farm three miles south of the Mark Mong Kawk village relocation site. They were accused of being wives of the Shan resistance soldiers and killed. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On October 19, 1998, SPDC troops led by Captain Htun Maung from Kunhing township, Shan State went on patrol and met Nang Zarm Oo, aged 26, Nang Nu Harn, aged 18, Nai Sai Leng, aged 22, and Nang Mawng Zing, aged 20, who were working in fields 5 km north of Kunhing. All of them were rounded up and taken by the troops. They were repeatedly raped by the commander and his soldiers for two days and two nights. They were released when they arrived back to Kunhing, and were warned not to report the rape to anyone or they would be killed. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On October 19, 1998, two privates Maung Kyi and Than Htaik, from Company No 1 of Captain Sein Win of IB 227, raped Nang Seng Mawn, aged 17, at Wan Nam village, Murng Yarng township, Shan State. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On November 18, 1998, SPDC soldiers from IB 286 based in The Chaung village in Thayetchaung township, Tenasserim Division, killed nine villagers accusing them of being KNU supporters. These nine villagers were Saw Kalay Sa, Saw Htoo Mee, Saw Dah Bu, Saw Yo Mhwe, Saw Pauk Htoo, Saw Pwa Pwa, Naw Si as well as an unnamed two-year- old girl and a three- year- old boy. They were all from Tanyin Chaung village and

were found by the soldiers while they were working in their fields. They were accused of providing food for KNU soldiers and killed later. Naw Si was gang-raped before she was killed. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On September 10, 1998, a platoon of the Burmese army led by Sergeant Aung Shwe, from LIB 303 based in Mawlaik, Sagaing Division, came to Congthia village, Thantlang township. They forcibly collected six villagers including one woman to act as porters. On their way to the next village, the sergeant ordered his troops and five porters to go ahead but he ordered Miss Nunau (name changed) to stay behind with him. Then the sergeant raped her. She reported this to the village elders. (*Source: CHRO*)

◆ On September 12, 1998, troops from LIB 374 based in Kyauktaw township, Arakan State, rounded up U Hla Pyo, aged 50, Ko Tha Sein aged 30, Daw Hla Myint aged 42, and Ma Nyo Nwe, aged 18, from Shwe Hlaing village in the region. They were forced to carry military equipment and the two women were repeatedly raped by the troops. All four were killed after their service. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On September 27, 1998, Nang Kya Non, aged 26, of Kaeng Lom village which had been forcibly relocated to a site in Kunhing township, Shan State, was gang-raped by troops from IB 246 led by commander Myint Oo. She was found with her younger brother on her farm located 3 km from town. She was seized to act as a guide by the troops and raped for whole two nights by the soldiers. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On December 7, 1998, a military column led by Major Aung Thein Oo from LIB 341 rounded up five Karen women including Naw Phawra, 33 year old, found working in their fields. They were taken from their huts and gang-raped by the soldiers. Later all five women were killed and their bodies were left under bushes. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ On December 10, 1998, Captain Soe Hlaing from LIB 424 raped and killed Nang Sa, aged 19, at Nawng Kaw village, Wan Zard, Kaesee township, Shan State. She was raped on her vegetable farm outside of her village. After raping her, the captain beat her on the head with a heavy stick that caused her death. He then took her necklace and some money. (*Source: SHRF*)

14. The refugee Situation and Forced Repatriation

14.1 Background

Widespread human rights violations in Burma's ethnic minority states have had a significant negative impact on neighboring countries, particularly Thailand, Bangladesh, and India, which have all been affected by large refugee flows. But other countries have also been faced with large numbers of refugees — some 10,000 Rohingyas, or Muslims from the Arakan State, remain in Malaysia and until very recently 10,000 Kachin refugees were in China's Yunnan Province. Presently there are over 100,000 refugees in Thai camps alone, and at least that number outside of these camps in Thailand, where refugee numbers from Burma are at an all-time high. The continuing economic downturn throughout Asia makes it even more difficult for these countries to cope with more refugees, as they are faced with widespread unemployment and other problems. In addition incursions by SPDC troops and various armed opposition groups into Thai territory are a security threat, and several Thai nationals have been killed as a result during the last four years.

Rampant systematic human rights abuses have driven at least a million people from Burma away from the security of their homes. Their flight, however, does not guarantee their safety. Many refugees risk terrible dangers on their journey towards the border, or when crossing the border itself, and they later face further human rights violations, such as forcible return from the country where they have sought asylum. Refugees from Burma are in double jeopardy: at home, and as refugees abroad.

Since the first refugees crossed from Burma into Thailand fifteen years ago, the UNHCR have not been allowed a role on the border the two countries share. The Royal Thai Government (RTG) did not want to recreate a similar situation to that which had grown up on the Cambodian border with the Khmer refugees: a refugee growth industry with many expatriate NGO workers providing a range of assistance. The Cambodian camps gave residents formal and non-formal education, skills and vocational training, and income-generating programmer, greatly outstripping what was made available by the RTG to local Thai villagers.

Until now refugees are still in camps strung along the border with Burma. Some - the Mon people - are now 'repatriated' across the border, but continue to live in camps in areas protected by a cease-fire agreement with the military government in Rangoon and the New Mon State Party. They still fear returning to their original homes because of the continuing human rights abuses by the Burmese military, including forced relocation and forced labor, both of which make a sustainable livelihood for subsistence farmers well nigh impossible.

Others, including some 95,000 Karen, remain on the Thai side strung along several hundred miles of the border. The SPDC now controls almost all of the border in these areas for the first time in history and the local Karen peoples are treated as hostile enemy. Often without warning their villages come under mortar and rifle attack. Their lives are at peril, their property looted, their fields, food stores, and animals are requisitioned or destroyed.

Such attacks may be the first they know that they have to relocate. All other areas are designated 'free-fire' zones where any person found will be shot out of hand. With the Karen opposition forces losing most of the land they once held, the first six months of 1997 saw a greater influx of Karen refugees into Thailand than in any other previous six month period. The flow of refugees into Thailand steadily continued throughout 1998.

Moving further north around the top of Thailand things become more difficult for people fleeing from the aggressions of the Shan military. Those from Shan State are not allowed to seek sanctuary and live in designated camps where they can be assisted by NGOs, like the Karen and Karenni peoples in the camps to the south. These people, when caught, are treated as illegal immigrants seeking work in Thailand, and detained until they are deported back to the border. It is recently estimated that some 300,000 people have been affected by the SPDC military's village relocations in this area of Burma.

14.2. Situation of Karen refugees

Human rights violations took place in the context of widespread counter-insurgency activities against the Karen National Union (KNU), one of the last remaining armed ethnic minority opposition groups still fighting the SPDC. Guerrilla fighting between the two groups continues, but the primary victims are Karen civilians. Civilians are at risk of torture and extrajudicial executions by the military, who appear to automatically assume that they supported or were even members of the KNU. Civilians also became sitting targets for constant demands by the SPDC for forced labor and portering duties.

When the military reasserted power in September 1988 after suppressing a nationwide pro-democracy movement, they adopted a policy of negotiating cease-fires individually with ethnic minority armed opposition groups rather than engaging with umbrella organizations which grouped them together. Since 1989 they have agreed 17 cease-fires with various armed opposition groups. Although peace talks have taken place between the KNU and the central government, the KNU apparently rejected the government's offer in late March 1999 for the resumption of cease-fire talks. The KNU state that they will only enter negotiations for a full-scale political settlement, rather than a limited military cease-fire agreement.

The KNU has been fighting for freedom from the military government for 50 years. The government stepped up its counter-insurgency activities against the KNU in 1984, when Karen refugees began to flee to Thailand. In December 1994 the KNU suffered a major setback when a group of disaffected Buddhist Karen troops left the KNU and formed their own group, the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA). After the split, the then SLORC immediately formed a tactical alliance with the DKBA, providing them with supplies and propaganda support, although no formal cease-fire agreement between the two is known to have taken place. In early 1995 SPDC and DKBA troops captured Manerplaw and Kawmoora, the KNU's two largest remaining bases. By early 1997 the KNU had lost the vast majority of its territory to the SPDC army.

The Karen State continues to be subject to a high level of militarization as the DKBA and the SPDC conduct joint operations against the KNU to occupy villages. Although the present status of the DKBA vis-a-vis the SPDC is not entirely clear, it is clear that the DKBA operates with the cooperation and support of the SPDC. The DKBA number over

1,000 troops, and their headquarters is at Myaing Gyi Ngu, near Pa-an, capital of Karen State, where they claim to take responsibility for some 50,000 civilians. Both the DKBA and the SPDC are responsible for widespread human rights violations. As well as the DKBA, there are other local Karen-led or ex-KNU militia groups, some of whom have cease-fire agreements with the SPDC, and special counter-insurgency SPDC forces. The activities of these various armed factions have led to great instability in some parts of the Karen State, characterized by forcible relocations, village burning, and extrajudicial executions.

SPDC and DKBA troops have accused villagers of helping the KNU in various ways, and punished them for their purported actions. In addition, DKBA and SPDC troops stole villagers' rice, livestock, and other possessions, adding yet another hardship. According to reports SPDC officers do not provide their troops with adequate supplies, so troops in effect live off the villagers. Villagers were also frequently required to pay various forms of arbitrary taxes, including fees to avoid forced portering and labour and fines if the SPDC claimed there was KNU activity in the area.

Another hardship suffered by Karen farmers is forcible relocation, which the SPDC uses as a means of breaking up alleged support or links between civilians and armed ethnic minority groups. Forcible relocations are part of the army's "Four Cuts" counter-insurgency strategy, which entails cutting alleged links of intelligence, food, money and recruits between armed opposition groups and local civilians. Since 1996 hundreds of thousands of ethnic minority civilians have been pushed off their land and homes by the SPDC in the Karen, Karenni, and Shan States. Such disruption has caused tens of thousands of internally displaced people to seek refuge across the border in Thailand. There are approximately 84,000 Karen refugees in camps there, and thousands of other displaced Karen civilians on the Burma side of border.

Many of the Karen civilians from Karen State had been forced off their land by the SPDC troops. In 1995-1996 Burmese military presence increased in some areas in Karen State and in 1997, 102 villages were reportedly destroyed in Pa-an district alone by the army. As a result 40,000 people were believed to have been displaced; some fled to Thailand, others went to SPDC-designated relocation sites, and still others hid in the forest. All of these groups have lost their land, homes, and most of their possessions. Some had previously been forced out of their villages by the SPDC, and had been hiding in the forest. Conditions there were poor, as it was almost impossible for them to farm. They also feared being shot on sight by the military because they occupied "black areas", where the insurgents were allegedly active. Many others fled directly from their home villages in the face of village burning, constant demands for forced labor, looting of food and supplies, and extrajudicial killings at the hands of the military. All of these people were farmers who typically grew small plots of rice on a semi-subsistence level.

More than 300 refugees from Burma arrived at Zala refugee camp in northern Thailand on January 11, 1999 following widespread and indiscriminate looting and killing by Burmese army troops. According to the refugees, at the beginning of December 1998 the Burmese army began using guerrilla-style smaller units instead of regular infantry columns in the military operation against the Karen National Union (KNU). The units, with code-names such as "Sweeping Broom", "Dragon" and "Tempest", were commanded by Burma's Southern Military Region. Human rights violations by the Burmese army have been reported in this area for a number of years. Sources report that these new units, however,

have been given express permission to loot and burn villages and to kill any villagers in sight. Refugees report that rape by the new units is commonplace. (*Source: ABSDF*)

14.3. Attack on the refugee camps inside Thailand in 1998

The first cross-border attacks came in February 1995, just after Manerplaw had fallen and thousands of new refugees had fled across the border into Thailand. The DKBA immediately started attacking Thailand, kidnapping or killing refugees and burning their houses in attempts to frighten them into returning to Burma. Refugees were ambushed and gunned down at Huay Heng, refugee leaders were kidnapped at Mae Kong Kha and Ber Lu Ko, and part of the new Mae Ra Mo Kloh refugee camp was burned. As 1995 continued the DKBA began targeting long-established refugee camps. In late April, Baw Noh and Kamaw Lay Ko camps were completely destroyed and had to be consolidated into other existing camps. As tension increased and other camps were threatened, refugees were moved and camps such as Gray Hta (Mae Salit) and Kler Ko were closed before they could be attacked. However, only a small minority of refugees returned to Burma; for most refugees, the attacks only strengthened their resolve not to return to live under soldiers who conduct such atrocities.

From 1995 to the present, there have been hundreds of incursions into Thailand by DKBA and SLORC/SPDC troops to conduct attacks. Most have been small-scale attacks by local DKBA units to loot Thai shops and villages, or to kidnap or kill KNU officials. In the process, even Thai villages have been attacked and many Thai civilians have been killed in armed robberies by cross-border attackers. The major attacks on refugee camps also continue to occur every year, usually between January and April. Some of these attacks have included over a hundred DKBA and SLORC troops, in some cases with clear evidence of SLORC support such as mortar barrages from SLORC Army positions across the border. In January 1997, Huay Kaloke and Huay Bone camps were attacked and almost completely destroyed, and attackers also assaulted but failed to destroy Beh Klaw camp. Huay Bone camp was subsequently closed and the refugees moved to Huay Kaloke and Beh Klaw, while Huay Kaloke was rebuilt on the same site. After each wave of major attacks, especially those in 1997, Thai Army leaders have said it will never be allowed to happen again. But every year it does.

Thus far in 1998, three major refugee camp attacks have occurred: on the night of March 10-11 Huay Kaloke refugee camp was attacked and almost completely burned down, killing four refugees and wounding many more, Bae Klaw (a) Mae La camp was attacked for several days over the following week but not destroyed, and on the night of 22-23 March 22-23, Mawkel camp was attacked and 50 houses were burned down and 14 were wounded. Subsequent to these attacks tensions in other camps also increased and there were fears of imminent attack, particularly in Noh Po camp. The attacks were carried out by the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), backed by troops and support of the State Peace & Development Council (SPDC), military junta currently ruling Burma.

14.3.1. Huay Kaloke refugee camp

Huay Kaloke refugee camp is three kilometers from the Moei River, which forms

the border with Burma. It is home to almost 9,000 Karen refugees. There is a paved road from the Thai village of Ban Wan Kaew, right on the border, to the main gate of the camp. This road then goes through the Thai village of Huay Kaloke, going around the camp to the south, and continues eastward to join with the main north-south highway five kilometers further east.

This main group of attackers entered Section 1 of the camp from the east, firing M79 grenades and rocket-propelled grenades ahead of them, firing assault rifles, and then setting fire to each house as they passed. Most refugees estimate that there were about 50 attackers, but they divided into at least two groups and it is hard to be exact. They marauded through the entire camp, burning 84% (about 1,300) of the houses and shooting up the entire camp before leaving. The houses were all built of bamboo with leaf or thatch roofing, and burned very quickly giving off extreme heat. Upon hearing the shots and explosions, most refugees attempted to flee. There were no bunkers in the camp, so most people tried to flee to the surrounding farm fields. In 1997 as the attackers come from the west side, many refugees tried to flee eastward (away from the border), only to find that the main attack was coming from that direction, so people panicked and fled in all directions, trying to carry their children. Most had no time to save any of their belongings.

While fleeing, some people were fired on by the attackers and some came face to face with them. The attackers spoke Karen and the general consensus appears to be that most or all of the attackers in the camp were Karen from the DKBA, though there is some confusion about what they were wearing. Most witnesses say that most of them were wearing camouflage uniforms while others were in plain olive uniforms, and they were wearing a mixture of Burmese Army hats and military-style baseball caps. Witnesses consistently state that the attackers were clearly drugged or drunk; they were hyper-aggressive, their eyes were glazed and they were unaware of exactly what they were doing. When they encountered refugees they stole personal bags, watches and jewelry, and usually asked "Are you Buddhist or Christian?" Most refugees answered "Buddhist" regardless of their religion; the attackers often then said they would kill all the Christians, or asked the Buddhists why they haven't yet returned to Burma. Some attackers told refugees they would return 3 days later to kill all refugees who still remained in the camp.

36 refugees were wounded by bullets, shell fragments and burns. A 36-year-old woman named Ma Pein (a.k.a. Daw Pein) was shot and then burned to death beside her house; she had 2 children and was pregnant with her third. A 7-year-old boy named Pa Lah Ghay was hit in the head by shrapnel and died on the way to hospital. His elder brother was also wounded and is still in hospital. One entire family tried to hide from the shooting in a concrete well behind their house, but the intense heat from the burning houses turned the well into an oven and they were all very severely burned by the time they got out. Their 15-year-old daughter Naw Thweh Ghay Say Paw died of her burns three days later. Several weeks later, her 17-year-old sister Naw Sheh Wah Paw also died in hospital of her burns.

There was no resistance by Thai forces, who abandoned their checkpoints and withdrew from the camp well before the attack, just as they have done before almost every refugee camp attack since 1995. In fact, in this attack many refugees believe they recognized the vehicles which brought the attackers as Thai Army vehicles. The refugees fled to the camp monastery, which wasn't burned, and the fields surrounding the camp. Between 2 and 3 a.m. the Thai soldiers reappeared and wandered through the field, telling the refugees

to sit still and beating six people who could not understand Thai, including one 70-year-old woman whom a Thai soldier kicked in the back with his Army boots. Later the Thai soldiers ordered all the refugees to go back and stay in the ashes of the camp.

Three days after the attack Thai soldiers went around the fields and the Thai village, again ordering all the refugees to go back and stay in the ashes of the camp, telling them that if they didn't obey then the Thai Army would burn the makeshift shelters they had put up and push them back to Burma at gunpoint. The refugees were afraid to do so, because during the attack DKBA soldiers had told refugees that they would come back after three days and kill anyone who remained in the camp. That night a jeep once again entered and toured the camp, leading some refugees to believe that the Thai Army was bringing the SPDC or DKBA to inspect the results of their work.

14.3.2. Bae Klaw (a) Mae La refugee camp

Beh Klaw (a) Mae La refugee camp is fifty kilometers north of Huay Kaloke. Up to 1995 it housed about 5,000 Karen refugees, but when other camps were destroyed or closed many of them were ordered to move to Bae Klaw by Thai authorities. The latest population moved to Bae Klaw consisted of most of the 10,000 refugees at Sho Kloh, which was closed in February 1998 as part of the Thai plan to consolidate camps. By March 1998 Bae Klaw had a population of over 30,000 refugees, making it the largest refugee camp on the Thai-Burma border. In January 1997 the DKBA tried to attack Bae Klaw but were driven back by Karen camp security and Thai forces. This year of 1998, fears of an attack began when a small group of DKBA troops crossed the border on February 15 and tried to fire M79 grenades into the camp. The grenades fell short and the soldiers went back, but from then on refugees in the camp were extremely tense. In early March there were reports that they may be about to be attacked, and many people started leaving the camp every night to sleep in the forested hills to the east, on the other side of the main north-south highway. On March 10, there were reports that an SPDC or DKBA force had crossed into Thailand, looking for ways to attack Beh Klaw while laying landmines on Thai soil. This force entrenched itself in Thailand until March 16. Most refugees in the camp began digging bunkers.

On the nights of March 11, 12, and 13, Thai soldiers based outside the camp and further south at the Maw Pa Thu turnoff fired some flares and mortar shells toward Burma, though witnesses claim the mortar shells were either blank or not aimed at Burmese or DKBA positions. On March 14, the DKBA based at Maw Pa Thu fired three mortar shells at the Thai post at the Maw Pa Thu turnoff. Only two of the shells exploded. They also fired shells at the Thai village of Nya Mu Kloh, setting fire to some houses. The DKBA captured a cliff in Burma from the KNLA, putting the camp and the Thai positions in easy shelling range. On the morning of March 15, these troops fired eight mortar shells into an area southwest of Beh Klaw, hoping to drive out the Karen camp security force which was blocking the SPDC/DKBA force in Thailand from reaching the camp. At about noon, they fired seven 105-mm artillery shells at the camp itself. Three shells landed inside the camp, wounding Pa Kyot Klot, a middle-aged man.

By this time many more Thai troops had been moved into the area, and they began firing shells at the SPDC/DKBA position across the border. Another Burmese force crossed

into Thailand, kidnapped five Thai citizens from Nya Mu Kloh village and mined the area around the village. The villagers were later released, but three Thai soldiers were wounded when their vehicle hit a mine along the road near the village. More Thai troops were sent in, and armored personnel carriers were patrolling the roads. At the same time, fighting was continuing on the Burma side of the border between KNLA and SPDC/DKBA forces. By March 16, small groups of SPDC and DKBA troops were still in Thailand trying to find ways to attack the camp, but they failed and eventually went back across the border.

14.3.3. Mawkel refugee camp

On the night of the March 22, 1998, a combined DKBA/SPDC force crossed the border and attacked Mawkel refugee camp, 49 km. south of Mae Sot and home to about 8,400 Karen refugees. The attack force first positioned itself at the main Karen Buddhist monastery in the camp, Wah Lay monastery. One group remained at the monastery and fired 2.5 inch mortars and M79 grenades into the camp while at least 2 other small groups of four to eight attackers headed into sections 6 and 7, firing small arms and setting houses alight. It is not known how many attackers stayed beside the monastery, but most of the refugees believe they were SPDC troops while the groups burning the houses were Karen DKBA troops. Several witnesses saw the Karen troops cursing the Burmese, shouting “Mother fuckers! We are in front of you, why are you shelling us?” The attackers burning the houses appeared quite disorganized, arguing with each other over whether or not to shoot and whether or not to burn the houses, and asking each other for lighters to start the fires. On encountering refugees, the attackers didn’t hurt them but usually asked “Where are the Muslims?” There is a sizable Muslim population in Mawkel, but the attackers never reached that part of the camp. Some witnesses say that some of the attackers were young boys in uniform, and most of the refugees who encountered them say the attackers were confused and afraid. It appears they were too afraid to stay long in the camp, as they left within an hour having burned only 50 houses (45 in Section 6 and 5 in Section 7), the small Buddhist monastery, and a community hall (the camp’s main Karen Buddhist monastery was not burned). No houses were burned in other sections of the camp, though some refugees were wounded in Sections 1 and 3.

An estimated 291 refugees were left homeless. 14 refugees were injured, including 4 who were seriously wounded. One 7-day-old baby named Tha Tha had both of his legs broken, and his mother (Nha Ma Chan, age 25, Muslim) and father were also hit by shrapnel. Moo Rah Paw, a 2-year-old girl, was hit in the lower jaw by mortar shrapnel. “Daw Sein” (not her real name), 25, was shot in her hand while trying to carry her baby away from her house, and had to have a finger amputated. No one was killed. Fortunately, most of the refugees had already dug small bunkers behind their houses in fear of such attacks, so most people ran into their bunkers and sheltered there rather than trying to flee the camp. On seeing people in their bunkers, the attackers usually just asked them where the Muslims were or what village they were from, and then left them alone. Some people were even told to get back in their bunkers.

Thai soldiers supposed to protect the camp were nowhere to be seen, and had apparently withdrawn several hours prior to the attack. Karen refugees acting as camp sentries raised the alarm, but they were unarmed so they could do little. Despite the fact

that Thai soldiers provided no resistance to the attack, on their way to or from the camp the attackers captured four Thai soldiers and took them back to Burma. Thai Army sources later confirmed that these Thai soldiers were executed in Burma. This may have occurred in retaliation for the Thai Army's part in preventing Bae Klaw camp from being destroyed the week before.

Refugees claim that there were SPDC troops among the attack force. In Huay Kaloke people claim to have encountered Burmese troops among those who were shooting up the camp; in Maw Ker they claim that the troops hiding behind the monastery were Burmese; at Beh Klaw, Karen camp security people claim to have encountered SPDC troops inside Thailand; and at Noh Po, Thai soldiers have reported encounters with SPDC units entering Thailand on a daily basis to seek a way to attack Noh Po camp. In spite of this, the fact remains that when the camp attacks have occurred, the majority of the attackers have been Karen DKBA troops. Given the availability of DKBA troops and the SPDC's control over them, it would be foolish for the SPDC to arrange the attacks in any other way.

Regardless of whether or not its troops entered the camps, the SPDC has definitely been involved in organizing and supporting these attacks. The DKBA is totally reliant on the SPDC for all of its supplies, weapons and ammunition, and freedom to move within Burma. There is no way they could carry out such attacks without at least tacit SPDC support. Furthermore, DKBA units along the border exist as small local groups attached to SPDC Battalions and under the direct control of those Battalions. They are even used to loot chickens from Karen villages, as messengers, and to round up and supervise forced labor on SPDC road projects. They have no opportunity to assemble for large-scale cross-border attacks unless this can be arranged by the SPDC. The SPDC has never trusted the DKBA; this is why it has replaced them with the KPA in most of Doooplaya District, and why DKBA soldiers regularly complain that the SPDC keeps them on tight ammunition rations of a few bullets each. There is no way the SPDC would allow 100 or more DKBA troops to assemble for operations which are not under its control. Nor does the DKBA have a strong enough command structure to prepare such an operation. When DKBA units do act on their own, it is in groups of four or five, demanding petty extortion from local villages or crossing into Thailand to loot a Thai shop. In contrast, the attacks on refugee camps of this year and previous years have involved DKBA troops being transported several hundred kilometers through SPDC territory by truck, mortar barrages on Thailand from SPDC-held positions, and other similar support measures which require time and skill to organize effectively, as any experienced Army officer can testify. When SPDC leaders claim they have no involvement in the attacks and no control over the DKBA, this is beyond belief. When leaders of the Thai Government and the Thai Army pretend to believe it, they are most likely doing so to protect their close relationship with the SPDC and their economic interests in Burma.

14.3.4. Current status of the camps attacked in 1998

For some time after the attacks, the atmosphere in all of the camps remained extremely tense. Now with the initial onset of the rains tensions have relaxed somewhat, although Thai soldiers based at Huay Kaloke have told refugees there to dig bunkers in case of further attack and most refugees have done so. Most refugees in Beh Klaw, Maw

Ker and Noh Po have also made bunkers near their houses, and many refugees in Huay Kaloke still leave the camp every night at sundown to sleep in the nearby Thai village. The main concern in the minds of the refugees now, particularly in Huay Kaloke, is wondering what is to happen next to their camps.

In Maw Ker, refugees whose houses were destroyed have been trying to rebuild them. After the attack there was further discussion about moving the camp, but this appears to have been postponed for the time being. At Huay Kaloke it was made clear shortly after the attack that the camp would be moved but the Thai authorities have been acting extremely slowly, possibly in the hope that some refugees would get tired of living in tiny shelters among the ashes and return to Burma. As a result, they have now been living in those shelters for over 2 months. Entire families are crammed into lean-to's with roofs of straw or plastic sheeting with nothing but sleeping mats for a floor. This was unbearable enough under the sun of the hot season, but now that the rains have arrived it is completely unlivable. Under international pressure, the Thai authorities have finally located a new site for the Huay Kaloke refugees, but their move there is currently being delayed by policy disagreements between different departments of the Thai Government. As a result, at the time of printing it appears that the Huay Kaloke refugees may be 'temporarily' moved to Beh Klaw in the first half of June until the Thai authorities can make a final decision on the new site. Moving and building houses in rainy season, which will continue until October, would be very difficult for the refugees and could lead to problems of illness. There is also disagreement among the NGOs who care for the refugees over the wisdom of moving the refugees to the new site, which is over 60 kilometers from the Burma border. Some argue that this is the best way to prevent further attacks, while others argue that it would be impossible for new refugees to make it there without being arrested and deported on the way, and that the Thai authorities would seal off the camp and make it like an internment camp in order to prevent the refugees from 'escaping' into central Thailand. However, it is generally agreed that some sort of new site is urgently required for the Huay Kaloke refugees.

14.3.5. Refugees from Burma killed by Thai security forces in 1998

Saw Ru, 27-year-old son of Saw Po Lu and Naw Ahku were shot by the Thai security guard and hit gunshot at his leg while he was trying to exit from the No Pho camp with other refugees on the night of January 12, 1998. No Pho is situated in Omphum district, Tak province. (*Source: HRDU*)

Nyan Lin, age 32 was killed on March 15, 1998 by Thai soldiers guarding Mawker refugee camp in Tak Province, western Thailand, which houses Karen refugees. He returned to the camp after the 6 p.m. curfew established by the Thai authorities, and was beaten to death. Three refugees, including Nyan Lin, tried to enter the camp at 6:30 p.m. after finishing work outside when they saw a group of Thai security forces coming towards them. Two of them escaped, but Nyan Lin hid in the bushes. Thai forces initially left the scene, but they returned, and one discovering Nyan Lin, beat him with their rifle butts. They reported this to the camp leader, who found Nyan Lin unable to walk or talk. He was then carried back to the camp on a stretcher, and eventually taken to the local hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival. A Thai military officer paid Nyan Lin's wife, Cherry 20,000 baht as compensation, but no criminal action was taken against the soldiers. The camp has

been under curfew from dusk to dawn, since Huay Kaloke refugee camp came under attack on the morning of March 11, 1998. (*Source: HRDU*)

14.4. Karenni refugees: Continuing flight of villagers to Thailand

During the first half of 1996, the SPDC, or SPDC's armed forces, began a massive relocation program of civilians as part of its counter-insurgency strategy in the Karenni State, eastern Burma. 20,000- 30,000 members of the Karenni ethnic minority were forced from their home villages into designated sites, where there was inadequate food, water, medical care, and sanitation facilities necessary for survival. In the last three years hundreds of people have reportedly died of treatable diseases, thousands have fled to Thailand, and still others have chosen to hide in the forest in an attempt to live outside of military control. During February 1999 Amnesty International interviewed dozens of those Karenni civilians who had escaped to Thailand in late 1998 and early 1999. They reported recent widespread incidents of forced labour and portering, arbitrary arrests and torture, and extrajudicial killings by the military, which occurred in the context of the internal displacement of civilians in the Karenni State.

Most of the human rights violations described below have taken place in relation to SPDC's counter-insurgency campaign against the ethnic minority armed opposition group, the Karenni National Progress Party (KNPP), who have been fighting for a free and independent Karenni State for over 50 years. Although the KNPP had agreed a cease-fire with the SLORC in March 1995, it disintegrated by June of that year when fighting resumed. The most recent cease-fire talks broke down in May 1998 in Rangoon after some KNPP units attacked SPDC troops near Loikaw, the capital of Karenni State. Although there are continuing skirmishes between the two, it is the civilians, caught in the middle of these forces, who suffer the vast majority of casualties. Since mid-1996 the SPDC attempted to gain complete control over areas of Karenni State near the border with Thailand. To support this military campaign, at the same time the junta launched a mass forced relocation campaign against rural villagers throughout the state, hoping to undermine the KNPP by removing or wiping out the entire civilian population in rural areas. Since then over 200 villages covering at least half the geographic area of the entire state have been forcibly relocated, burned and destroyed by Burmese Army troops under the command of the military regime, which was renamed the State Peace & Development Council (SPDC) in November 1997. There is no accurate census data available, but most of the villages only have 10 to 50 households and estimates of the number of villagers affected range between 30,000 and 50,000.

The SPDC ordered all villagers to move into Army-controlled relocation sites within one to two weeks, after which anyone seen in their home areas would be considered as enemy, i.e. shot on sight, and all houses and belongings found in villages would be confiscated or destroyed by the military. Over the following year relocation camps were established at several sites, including Shadaw and Nwa La Bo in northern Karenni, Ywathit, Daw Tama, Baw La Keh, Tee Po Kloh, Kay Lia, Mar Kraw She, and Daw Tama Gyi in central Karenni, and Mawchi and Pah Saung in southwestern Karenni. Several hundred people were ordered to move into each of the smaller sites, while several thousand people were ordered into larger sites like Shadaw. On arrival at the sites they were provided with nothing, and many people began to starve and die of disease.

They were not allowed to farm, though some were allowed to return to their villages to retrieve some food supplies. Many used this opportunity to flee into hiding in the forests, joining others who had hidden in the forests rather than go to the relocation sites.

Since 1997 there has been a steady trickle of families escaping from the relocation sites back to hide in the forests surrounding their home villages. According to reports from some of these villagers, conditions in the relocation sites have steadily deteriorated since the beginning. Villagers in the sites were provided with nothing at first, though once when many of them started to starve, the Army began giving small rations of rice in some sites. This rice, which was most likely confiscated from farmers in other areas, was quickly cut to less than half what people need to survive. People only have access to medicines if they can pay inflated prices for them and bribe the government medics, so many have died of treatable diseases such as malaria, diarrhea and dysentery. Other infectious diseases are also widespread.

According to villagers who fled the sites recently, in response to starvation the army now allows villagers in Shadaw relocation site to plant food, but the area of land allocated is very small and the soil is bad so the villagers have only been able to grow a small quantity of corn and nothing else. At the same time, villagers in Shadaw relocation site are still being used for forced labor both inside and outside the relocation site. The Army forces them to maintain Army facilities and a school, and also to maintain roads. There are reports that they are now being used to build a new road as well, though it remains unclear where this road is going.

According to escaped villagers, at Nwa La Bo relocation site north of Loikaw the Army is using the interned villagers as forced labor on an Army rubber plantation. There is no school, hospital or clinic in the camp, so those who get sick can only get treatment if they can get a pass to go to Loikaw town and pay for transport and treatment. Villagers also report that at Daw Te Her, a newer site north of Loikaw, boys aged 13 and above have been taken away in groups of twenty for military training, and that none of them have been seen since.

People who have recently fled the Mawchi area in southwestern Karenni claim that in Mawchi relocation site villagers have been forced to hand over all of their rice to the Army. Their rice is stockpiled in a church under Army guard, and they can only obtain a three days' supply at a time. There have also been reports that relocated villagers around Mawchi as well as Mawchi townspeople are being used as forced labor on the new road being built from Mawchi to Toungoo. This road winds through rough terrain for something like hundred miles, and is following the route of an old destroyed pre-war British road.

In towns such as Mawchi and Loikaw it appears that the townspeople are also living under intense restrictions. KNPP sources say that there are now four SPDC Battalions based in and around the state capital of Loikaw, and that townspeople have to obtain passes in order to leave the town limits.

Townspeople, villagers in the relocation sites and those in hiding in the forest have all been affected by the drought which caused the failure of the 1998 rice crop. Some estimates claim that the combination of the drought and the SPDC campaign of village destruction has caused the crop for the entire state to be no more than ten per cent of normal for this year. It appears that because of this the SPDC is now freely allowing people to flee the relocation sites, and many people have taken advantage of this to flee back to the

forests surrounding their home villages to try to survive there. It is difficult to obtain reliable information on how many people remain in the relocation sites, but there are probably still one or two thousand people in Shadaw, the largest relocation site, and several hundred up to a thousand in most of the other sites.

Many people have been living in hiding in the forests for two to three years now, and they are regularly joined by more who are fleeing the relocation sites. SPDC patrols have destroyed almost all of the 200 or more villages which have been relocated, but people still try to live in small shelters in the forest and grow small amounts of food in their old fields or in patches of cleared ground. In northern and eastern Karenni, the KNPP says that there are three SPDC platoons currently doing most of the sweeps to eliminate villagers. These patrols pass through destroyed villages as often as every week or two to hunt out and destroy shelters and food supplies and shoot on sight any villagers that they find. According to the KNPP, the SPDC patrols have also placed landmines and booby-traps in some of the villages they have destroyed because they know that the villagers in hiding regularly revisit their destroyed homes. In Mawchi area of southwestern Karenni, the patrols only come through every two to three months but when they come they are much more thorough than their counterparts in the north, covering every village and all the surrounding territory. When the relocations first started in 1996 many people in the area northwest of Mawchi simply ignored the orders and managed to stay in and around their villages, but in 1997 and 1998 SPDC troops razed villages throughout the area and physically drove people into the relocation sites. Now many of the villagers from Mawchi area have moved southward to the forests along the border with Karen State and have been trying to survive there.

For the people in the forests throughout Karenni the situation has been desperate for some time now. They have to regularly flee SPDC patrols, survive on little to no food and no medicine, and many of them have died of treatable diseases such as malaria, diarrhea and dysentery. Some villagers from the area around Mawchee say that many in the forests there have already died of diarrhea. The villagers in the forests long ago exhausted whatever food supplies they had hidden before the relocations began, and the drought and crop failures of 1998 have hit them very hard by wiping out whatever small quantities of food they were growing to survive. As a result of the complete lack of food and the continuing sweeps by SPDC troops, many more of them have been forced to consider the difficult and dangerous flight to refugee camps in Thailand.

Until mid-1998 the SPDC troops were actively trying to block escape routes to Thailand, but it appears that the food situation and a shift in military thinking may have changed this. While still hunting out and killing villagers in the forest, they also seem to be allowing more villagers to head for the Thai border. The military may be thinking that forcing people into relocation sites is no longer viable because there is no food, and that if people flee to Thailand then this still clears the area of civilians, which is one of their main military objectives.

For people in northern and central Karenni the flight to the Thai border is extremely difficult and dangerous; it takes several weeks travelling with the entire family, there is little or no prospect of food being available along the way, and there is always the possibility of encountering an SPDC patrol. However, many have been making the trip. Immediately following the first wave of relocations in mid-1996, about 3,000 people arrived at existing Karenni refugee camps in Thailand. A few months later another 1,300 arrived, and then the

flow decreased to a trickle as most people settled in to live in hiding in the forest or were effectively blocked from escape by SPDC troops. However, since January 1999 approximately 1,200 people have arrived in the refugee camps, most of them fleeing the Shadaw area of north-central Karenni. Some have been living in hiding in the forest for one to three years and fled because they could no longer produce or obtain any food. Others recently fled relocation sites back to the forests around their villages, but quickly found that there was no food to be had there and that SPDC patrols posed a constant danger. Most of the new arrivals are in very bad physical shape when they reach the border, sick, weak from the journey and emaciated from lack of food. There have also been handfuls of new arrivals from the Mawchi area; many more from this area would like to flee, but it is twice the distance of the trip from northern Karenni and twice as difficult and dangerous to travel, and there are few or no people available who can guide them along the way.

17 men, 10 women and 3 children from Seven families from Shadaw relocation camp fled across the border to seek safe shelter on Thai soil at the end of October 30, 1998. They said that they had decided to flee several times because they were almost starving. And they were even forced to work in military base.

Again in the next week after October 30, 1998, a group consisting 6 people arrived at a refugee camp in Thailand. These fleeing people from Daw Pa Pah and Won Ngaw villages, Loikaw township, fled across border and sought safe shelter. They were always threatened by SPDC troops of arrest with unasserted imputations. Before fleeing to the border they had stay in the forest for several days with little hope.

Seventeen families with 86 members of the Karenni internally displaced people fled across the border and made it to the refugee camp near Mae Hong Son in Thailand on November 30, 1998. Among them, 22 were men, 30 were women and 34 children. These fleeing people were Daw Soesha, Daw Lawbu, Daw Meku, Daw Shasei, Daw The and Daw Ei Sha. Seven families escaped from Shadaw relocation camp, nine families from Nwar La Boe relocation camp and a family from Palong relocation site. All these people complained that they fled because they were starving and could die. They could not afford any food. They worked for the military five days per week in their bases without allowing anyone to support them. However, they never provided them any food for their work.

Again, on December 2, 1998, 21 families comprising 130 of Karenni internally displaced people arrived at Karenni refugee camps near Mae Hong Son. Ten families from Htee Pokloe relocation site, four families from Daw Tamadu relocation site and seven families from Shadaw relocation camp. The fleeing people from Htee Pokloe and Daw Tamadu took 20 days to march to the border. Two elders over 70, were in the group. "There are many persecutions and difficulties in relocation camps," said a fleeing person.

Thirty-three families consisting 164 people fled across Thai border and made it to the refugee camp near Mae Hong Son on January 5, 1999. Among them, 62 were men, 83 were women and 19 children. The majority of these people escaped from Shadaw and from Palong relocation camp. They fled due to the lack of food supplies and extensive order of force labor demands by the military. Many of their family members had died due to the starvation and lack of medical care, the new refugees reported.

Sixty-six families comprising 382 population fled across Thai border and made it to the refugee camp near Mae Hong Son province on January 16, 1999. One hundred and ninety-nine were men and 183 were women. Twenty-six families from Shadaw relocation

camp, four families from Palong, fifty-five families from Daw The relocation site and twenty-one families from hide-out sites on Karenni-Shan border. People those who escaped from relocation camps complained that they fled because the military forced them to work at their base or at road construction project. They had to serve as porters without wages and had to raise food to feed their own families.

Most of the new arrivals have been accepted into the refugee camps by Thai authorities, though most of them are in a site called Karenni Camp 2 and there are serious concerns over the safety of this site. The camp is just 20 minutes' walk from an SPDC Army post just across the border, and has been attacked before by SPDC-backed forces. The attack occurred on January 1997; three refugees were killed and nine others were wounded, and there was no attempt by Thai forces to defend the camp.

14.5. Situation of Shan refugees in Thailand

The population of the Shan State, the largest of the seven ethnic minority states in Burma, is approximately eight million people. Of these, some four million are ethnic Shan. Other groups in the state include the majority Burmans, and the Pa'O, Akha, Lahu, Palaung, and Wa ethnic minorities. The Shan people are ethnically related to the Thai, have a similar language, and live in southern China and northern Thailand as well as in Burma. Most of them are Theravada Buddhist rice farmers. In pre-colonial times, the area that is now the Shan State was ruled by Shan princes who sometimes owed allegiance to Burman or Thai overlords and were sometimes independent. Under British colonial rule, the Shan areas were administered separately from the rest of Burma.

During negotiations between Britain and Burma about independence, Shan and other ethnic minority leaders demanded guarantees of minority rights in return for an agreement to join in a Union of Burma. These were conceded in an agreement between the Burmese Government and the Shan, Kachin, and Chin representatives in 1947 in Panglong, a Shan town. After Burmese independence in 1948, however, disputes arose between some Shan political figures and the central administration in Rangoon over the handling of Shan affairs. In 1958 the first Shan armed opposition group was organized, and since then various other groups took up arms. Since 1989 some of these groups have agreed cease-fires with the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC, the ruling military government), but the Shan States Army - South, or SSA, numbering some 3,500 troops, has continued in its armed struggle against the SPDC in central and southern Shan State.

When the military reasserted power in September 1988 after suppressing a nationwide pro-democracy movement, they adopted a policy of negotiating cease-fires individually with ethnic minority armed opposition groups rather than engaging with umbrella organizations which grouped them together. Since 1989 they have agreed 17 cease-fires with various ethnic minority armed opposition groups, including the Mong Tai Army (MTA, led by Khun Sa) in January 1996. Although Khun Sa surrendered to the SLORC, thousands of Shan troops have continued to fight for greater autonomy against the central Burman authorities. After Khun Sa's surrender, troops from the newly-formed Shan State Army-South began to move north from former MTA areas along the Thai-Burma border to the central Shan State.

Once the SSA-South moved into new areas, the SPDC began major counter-

insurgency activities against them. However as is generally the case in guerrilla warfare, most of their victims were Shan civilians, not SSA troops. Forcible relocation was the main tactic which the SPDC has employed in its counter-insurgency strategy against the SSA -South. Of the 300,000 relocated civilians in the Shan State, there are approximately 100,000 people in relocation sites, about 50,000 people hiding in the forest, some 50,000 people who have fled to other areas, and over 100,000 who have escaped to Thailand. Most of these people have been deprived of the right to earn a livelihood after they were pushed off land where they cultivated rice and raised livestock.

Regrettably, the Thai government continues to deny refuge to people fleeing human rights violations in Shan State. Shan refugees fleeing to Thailand have been repeatedly pushed back across the border by the Thai authorities, and unlike refugees from several other ethnic minority groups in Burma, Shan refugees receive no assistance from international aid organizations. When foreign embassy staff and representatives of the UNHCR have questioned Thai officials in Chiang Mai province about the large numbers of Shan refugees arriving since April 1996, they have been told that only the usual number of migrant laborers from Shan State have been crossing the border to work on farms and other work-sites. The result of Thai government policy means that to the present, any Shan refugees fleeing to Thailand must try to survive as illegal immigrants in Thailand. The risks and difficulties this involves have compounded their suffering.

For most refugees arriving Thailand, their main fear is that they will be arrested for illegal entry, the punishment for which is one month prison sentence or a fine of about 2,000 *baht*. Since the onset of Thailand's economic crisis in mid-97, and the resulting Thai government policy to expel illegal immigrants, there has been an increase in mass arrests along routes from the border and at work-sites in towns. This has greatly increased fears among refugees trying to survive in Thailand.

Most Shan refugees have ended up working on farms in Chiang Mai or Mae Hong Son provinces, or on construction sites in towns such as Chiang Mai or Bangkok. A Shan refugee from Laika township says, "In Thailand there are many people from Shan State now working in lychee orchards, in cultivation, in construction sites, and also in shops washing dishes..... Almost every shop, every house has Shan servants now."

The main difference between these refugees and the usual migrant workers from Burma is that the refugees generally consist of whole families, including young children and grandparents, whereas migrant workers tend to be mostly working adults without dependents. If adult refugees can earn a usually irregular wage for their labor, it is extremely low and must be used to support their children or elder relatives as well as themselves. This has made it very difficult for the refugees to survive.

Thai farmers in the border provinces have in recent years increasingly relied on migrant labor, and many Shan people have long been employed in farms and orchards along the Mae Hong Son, Chiang Mai and Chaing Rai borders. Thus, when large numbers of Shan refugees fled into Thailand over the last two years, many headed first to stay with friends and relatives in farming communities in the vicinity of the border. Farm workers tend to stay in huts located in the fields. Wages range from 30-100 *baht* a day, but the work is seasonal and sporadic. Many refugees who to survive on farms are later forced to move to cities in the hope that they could better survive by doing construction work. They hardly leave their work-site in case they are arrested by police, who often patrol the roads. They

will slip out only to buy supplies from local markets. When ill, they are unwilling to go to a Thai hospital, and prefers to buy medicine to treat themselves. When they move to work at the construction site, they only earn wages about 70-80 *baht* per day for women and 100-120 *baht* for men. However, the wage for digging ditches or collecting rubbish around the site can be as low as 35 *baht*. Work is also often only available for as little as ten days a month. Large numbers of workers live together in corrugated iron or bamboo shacks at the construction site. Members of several families may live crowded together in one room, in which food is also cooked. Common makeshift latrines and washing huts are usually located next to the living quarters.

By mid-1997, the work situation for Shan refugees had become increasingly difficult. The constant influx of refugees arriving in border areas meant that there was less agricultural work available. In the towns, the high numbers of refugees competing for work meant that it was an “employer’s market” - with a constant source of cheap labor available, employers found it easier to cheat their workers. For example, refugees worked at a site for one or more months with a promise of payment, then the employers called the police to come and arrest the workers.

Because of their illegal status, all Shan refugees are at risk of exploitation by unscrupulous agents and traffickers. Particularly in danger are girls and young women. For example, in the third week of February 1998, a woman refugee from Keng Kham, age 25, who had been working on a farm west of the district town of Fang for several months, was approached by a motorcycle-taxi driver at Fang market. He offered her a job for 3,500 *baht* per month. She agreed to go with him, and he handed her over to another man who paid the taxi driver 8,000 *baht*. She traveled by car to Bangkok, and then to a high-rise building near the sea. She was locked inside the ground floor, where there were all refugees from areas of forced relocation in Shan State, such as Laika, Munrg Nai, Keng Kham and Kengton. The youngest was a 13-year-old. The women were locked up all the time, and only let out when male customers took them out at night. Fortunately, for the woman from Keng Kham, she was able to escape after a week and return to Fang. Within two days of arriving back in Fang, the motorcyclist and agent from Bangkok came to find her at her former workplace, but luckily she had already moved on.

In the second half of 1997, the economic crisis began to have an impact on construction projects. In Chiang Mai, construction began to slow down on the large housing estate in outlying areas of the town, where thousands of migrant workers were working. Many employers stopped paying their workers. At the end of 1997, in an attempt to solve its economic crisis and create jobs for its increasing numbers of unemployed citizens, the Thai government began drawing up plans to repatriate the estimated one million immigrant workers inside Thailand, including approximately 800,000 migrants from Burma. Then began mass arrests in work-sites around the country, followed by “pushing back” immigrants to the border areas. In Chiang Mai, there have been repeated raids in construction sites since the beginning of 1998. Some groups of illegal immigrants have been sent back to the border and allowed to disperse on the Thai side. Some groups have actually been repatriated into the hands of SPDC troops at the border crossing of Nong Ook where they continue to face more abuses. For example, on January 20, 1998, a group of 60 Shan people who had been officially repatriated were forced by SPDC troops to go to Munrg Ton, and then to the Salween River at Ta Sarng. There they were made to work by the SPDC soldiers from IB

65 at a gravel-pit, crushing stones for a construction company.

Despite Thailand's economic problem, the resulting shortage of jobs and increased police crackdowns on migrants, refugees are continuing to pour over the border, coming from the relocation areas of Shan State. Several thousands of Shan civilians crossed the border in 1998. In the first four months of 1999, over 5,000 Shan refugees arrived in Thailand at one border crossing alone, and since March 1996, over 100,000 Shan refugees have fled to Thailand. They stated that they were aware of the problems in Thailand, but that they had no other choice if they were to survive inside Burma. In April 1998, new Shan and Lahu refugees arriving in Thailand reported that thousands of people had fled the Thai clampdown back across the border into Shan State, but they are living just inside the Shan State border, internally displaced but afraid or unable to return to their destroyed home areas. They are reportedly suffering severe food shortages, and many have committed suicide.

In March 1998 SPDC troops crossed into northwestern Thailand to attack a group of Shan refugees who had fled fighting between SPDC and the SSA near Ho Murng. After the attempted attack and the international concern expressed for these refugees, Thai authorities for the first time allowed a group of over 200 Shan refugees to move into an existing Karenni refugee camp. If this leads to further recognition of the Shan as legitimate refugees it could be a very positive move. However, current Thai policy is to deny asylum to all new refugees except in the case where they are "temporarily fleeing fighting", so there are still serious concerns that Thai authorities may decide to force these Shan refugees back across the border once they decide the "fighting" around Ho Murng has stopped and the SPDC indicates its willingness to "accept the refugees back".

At present there is no sign that the SPDC has any plan of letting up on its campaign against the Shan civilian population. The regime has already rejected the possibility of negotiations toward a ceasefire with the SSA, and apparently plans to continue wiping out the civilian population in the hope of eventually wiping out the opposition militarily. There is no telling how far the forced relocations will reach in the end, whether they could extend as far as Taunggyi in the west, to Kengtung in the east, or to Lashio in the north. Right now the area being wiped out is growing larger week by week and month by month. For the farmers of central Shan State, life in their villages has become impossible, life in the relocation sites means forced labor and starvation, and nothing but exploitation and eventual arrest and forced repatriation awaits them in Thailand. If they are to survive, this must be stopped.

14.6. Thai policy on refugees from Burma

From 1984 to the mid-1990s, Thai authorities allowed wave after wave of Karen refugees fleeing Burma to stay in camps along Thailand's western border. Despite the fact that the country is not party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, Thailand is a member of the inter-governmental Executive Committee of the Program of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR Excom). This body, which meets once a year in Geneva, oversees the work of the UNHCR and adopts conclusions regarding issues of refugee protection and assistance. It is the only international forum where refugee issues are discussed in a comprehensive manner, and its

conclusions represent an authoritative international consensus regarding standards of refugee protection. Ironically, all refugees who are present in Thailand without authorization are branded as 'illegal immigrants' and are at risk of refoulement to their country of origin at any time. UNHCR's visits to the border refugee camps are sometimes permitted but Thai authorities maintain it would allow only local organizations to care for the refugees. However, Thailand allows the UNHCR to maintain a limited presence in the country.

In November, 1997, a change of government in Thailand and the new administration promised that it would conduct its foreign policy in accordance with the principles of human rights. However, new refugees trying to enter Thailand found that Thai authorities were reluctant to recognize their claim of asylum. Thai authorities declared that Thailand could provide asylum only to those 'fleeing fighting'. On the ground this was clearly being interpreted as those 'fleeing immediate armed combat' and since the ethnic armies were deemed to have been defeated almost no new arrivals were considered to fit the asylum criteria. This resulted in a de facto 'no new refugees policy' in many camps. New refugees continued to cross the border and entered the camps near northern Karen State with many human rights abuses stories. Yet many new arrivals still remained outside the camps and as yet there is no clear policy for their future.

In March 1998, Thailand's Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai announced that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) would be allowed to play a role in managing aid for refugees and administering the camps. In April 1998, the Thai government agreed to the presence of the UNHCR on the Thai-Burma border, which in principle should help to prevent the practice of refoulement. The government has made the following comment about UNHCR's role; *"Thailand will also facilitate their return to their homeland with safety and dignity.... The UNHCR's role will cover four important areas of work, namely, to witness the process of admission, to assist the Thai authorities in registration, to assist the Thai authorities and give suggestion (if any) on the relocation of temporary shelter areas, and to assist the Myanmar displaced persons for their safe return."* In June 1998, the Royal Thai Government formally requested UNHCR's assistance in caring for some over 100,000 refugees from Burma accommodated in 13 camps scattered along the border between the two countries. UNHCR acceded to this request and decided that the agency's role should focus primarily on protection monitoring. Since then, the UNHCR has established offices and staff in Mae Sod, Mae Hong Son and Kanchanaburi, gained access to the camps, and begun implementing its programs to fulfill its mandate of protection.

In the past, Thailand has allowed the UNHCR only limited access to the Burmese refugee camps and has been asked to help on a case-by-case basis. Thailand has been concerned that the presence of the UNHCR would attract more asylum seekers across the border, and the refugee camps would become more permanent. The Thai government is concerned that allowing the UNHCR an enhanced role along the border may upset Rangoon. Although the UNHCR's work is considered humanitarian and nonpolitical, the Burmese government views the agency as representatives of the western community which it repeatedly criticizes. Thailand is no doubt concerned that by upsetting its volatile neighbor, existing and potential economic agreements could be threatened. However, Thailand also wants to solve the expensive and often embarrassing refugee problem, and realizes that it will only be safe and acceptable to send refugees back when the civil war ends. However, the Royal Thai Army has faced increasing criticism for its inability to protect the over

100,000 refugees in camps from cross-border attacks. This year has already seen repeated attacks on Huay Kaloke (a.k.a. Wangka), Bae Klaw (aka Mae La) and Mawker camps, and other camps are currently on alert fearing further attack. The Thai government now hopes a UNHCR presence will provide more protection for the refugees, and help deflect criticism for inadequate security when the camps are threatened or attacked.

In January, 1999, before the full details of UNHCR's role had been decided upon and before permanent staff were in their field offices, the agency faced two situations where the Thai authorities were threatening to repatriate new arrivals. In Karenni (near Mae Hong Son) and Karen (near Mae Sot) camps, the Thai authorities rounded up new arrivals and announced that they would be sent back to Burma. In both situations, NGO and UNHCR staff intervened and prevented the threatened refoulement. Though they excluded the UNHCR from the process in the Karenni camp, the Thai authorities agreed to jointly interview the new arrivals with UNHCR staff in the Karen camp to determine if they were legitimate refugees. Presumably, they wanted to screen out Burmese immigrants working in surrounding towns who were using the camp as a base and others who fled to Thailand for purely economic reasons. In February, the status of some of the families was unclear, but by mid-March the UNHCR announced that all the new arrivals had been screened into the camps and were being provided with rations and housing. However, this status is not official, and the refugees themselves have not been informed of any permanent status.

14.7. Arrest and harassment of Burmese opposition groups in Thailand

Burmese dissident groups in and around Bangkok have always been particularly at risk of arrest by the Thai authorities. On May 20, 1998, in Nonthaburi province near Bangkok, a large group of police raided the office of the Human Rights Documentation Unit of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB). Fourteen people were arrested, including asylum-seekers and refugees. Documents about the human rights violations in Burma and many office equipment were confiscated at the same time and the office was searched. The group was then taken to Nonthaburi police station. On May 22, they were taken to court, charged with illegal entry to Thailand, fined and taken to IDC that evening. On May 23, the group was taken to Thai-Burma border and sent by Thai police across the Moei River to Burmese territory, where the group dispersed.

Another group of 31 Burmese students was arrested outside the Burmese Embassy in late August 1998 after a prolonged peaceful sit-in protest about the human rights situation in Burma. The group was taken to the Bangkok Immigration Detention Center (IDC) where they were held for two weeks and then transferred to the Special Detention Center at Bankhen Police Academy. Although seven were released on November, the other 24 are being detained until the end of 1998, and have not been brought to trial.

14.8. Thai policy on migrant workers from Burma

Estimates of the number of Burmese migrant workers range from 500,000 to one million. The number increased dramatically during 1995 and 1996, as human rights abuses

forced many young men and women to leave Burma in search of a better life. Originally, Burmese people saw Thailand simply as a place of refuge, but the booming economy in Thailand has also been an attraction for Burmese migrants.

It is impossible to make a simple distinction between the economic hardships faced by the Burmese population and the human rights violations suffered throughout the country. Many people from Burma who have fled to Thailand do not have enough to eat, due in part to the widespread practice of forced labor. Such people work under conditions so harsh that they are prevented from earning a living. Their situation has often resulted in people drawing of purely 'economic' assessments of the reasons for their migration, but such assessments are not easy to make when they are based upon sweeping generalizations. Many migrant workers themselves state that they have left Burma because of economic hardships. But in reality, many have fled from serious human rights violations. The distinction between the economic abuses suffered by the Burmese population and the serious violations of their civil and political rights is not necessarily a clear one; many of migrant Burmese in Thailand have been unable to make a living in their homeland because of forced labor and forced relocations.

Similar to the situations of migrant laborers all over the world, the Burmese have provided Thailand with a cheap form of unskilled labor that has become crucial to the country's economy. Burmese laborers work under conditions known as the 'three Ds' - the dirty, dangerous, and difficult work, in areas where Thai people, when given the choice, refuse to work.

Thai Government considers all Burmese asylum seekers 'illegal immigrants' and makes no distinction between them and other migrants. Thai police arrest and detain refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly Burmese nationals, on a regular basis in and around Bangkok and other cities. Such detainees are not given an opportunity to challenge the legality of their detention as required by international standards. Burmese asylum-seekers convicted of illegal entry are fined and imprisoned in immigration detention centers before being taken to the border between Thailand and Burma. Even those asylum-seekers who are under the protection of UNHCR in Thailand are often detained and harassed by the Thai authorities, to the point that many of them are forced to abandon their efforts to seek asylum.

Thai policies on Burmese in Thailand have resulted in creating more difficulties for asylum seekers who wish to remain protected in Thailand. The Thai government is currently discussing extensive plans to deport the thousands of illegal immigrant workers from Burma, and as such, new refugee arrivals are being denied admission into existing refugee camps; increased restrictions are making the camps less habitable; and major camp consolidation programs will result in a 'loss' of camp residents. These policies can be interpreted as 'push' factors, forcing Burmese refugees to leave camps in Thailand. Under such conditions, decisions that are made by refugees cannot be accurately be described as voluntary decisions.

To solve its unskilled-labor shortage problems and in an effort to document the illegal immigrant population in Thailand, significant resolutions concerning foreign laborers were passed between June 25 and August 27, 1996 during the administration of former Thai Prime Minister, Banharn Silpa Archa. The Thai cabinet approved a NSC proposal for the Thai government to impose controls on foreign laborers on June 25, 1997. In accordance

with Thai Immigration Act (1979), illegal foreign workers were viewed as immigrants awaiting deportation. The resolutions allowed select illegal immigrant worker groups to work in 43 of Thailand's 72 provinces under a variety of conditions.

According to the resolution, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare granted a temporary work permit, valid for two years, to foreign laborers in 43 provinces out of a total 73. Under the scheme, Thai firms were required to register their workers every three months. The Interior Ministry wants employees to register alien workers, for which they are charged 1,000 *baht* for the registration fee, 1,000 *baht* for the work permit, 700 *baht* for a medical check-up and another 800 *baht* for a health insurance card for each worker. Many business people cannot afford to do this. The workers could only perform unskilled jobs in the fishing industry and the manufacturing sectors. As of March 1997, 340,819 foreign people had been registered by their employers.

However, at the beginning of November 1997, the Thai Government announced that it would launch a crackdown on 'illegal alien workers' in Thailand. The crackdown came amid the depths of Thailand's worst economic crisis in decades, which threatened to send the number of unemployed soaring from around one million to 2.8 million in 1998. The Thai Government chose to discontinue the temporary allocation of work permits to foreign laborers as part of their campaign to find new jobs for Thais. This action aimed to prevent illegal migrant workers seeking low-paid unskilled jobs in Thailand, a need that the government agreed Thai workers could fulfil. Chairman of the Thai House Labor and Social Welfare Committee said that the committee had decided to push non-registered alien workers back home to help jobless Thais because, "...the influx of alien workers has posed a threat to national security as well as to Thai workers who could lose their jobs to these immigrants. If they are not sent back home, Thai workers will suffer."

At the beginning of December, Thai Government announced that it would launch a crackdown on illegal alien workers in Thailand. Estimates of their numbers vary but go as high as one million. The Thai Government has chosen to discontinue the temporary allocation of work permits to foreign labor as part of a campaign to find jobs for Thais. At the end of 1998, more than 270,000 illegal foreign workers have been reportedly deported since January 1998 as part of government policy to replace alien workers with Thais. According to the Immigration Department, the office has so far deported 271,019 illegal foreign workers and arrested 34 people for smuggling foreigners into the country. Furthermore, 111 others have been arrested for housing foreign workers since January 1998.

14.9. Discrimination against the Rohingya in Burma

Notwithstanding the UNHCR's claims of success, returning Rohingya refugees continue to face discrimination and persecution by the SLORC/SPDC because of their ethnicity. The pattern of repression occurs in the context of the SLORC/SPDC's denial of citizenship rights to the Rohingya. Under the 1982 Citizenship Law, which was promulgated shortly after Rohingya refugees returned from the 1978 exodus to Bangladesh and was designed specifically to deny citizenship to the Rohingya. Under this Law, a person in order to become a full citizen must prove the residency in Burma of all his or her ancestors back to 1823, the year before the British government annexed Arakan.

Under this Law, there are three categories of citizenship, 'citizens', 'associate citizens', and 'naturalized citizens'. Full citizenship was limited to 'nationals such as Kachin, Karen, Chin, Burman, Mon, Rakhine or Shan and ethnic groups as have settled in any of the territories included within the State as their permanent home from a period prior to 1185 B.E. or 1823 A.D'. If a person cannot give proof of residence of all ancestors prior to this date, he or she can be classified as an associate citizen if one grandparent, or pre-1823 ancestor, was a citizen of another country. Those persons who had qualified for citizenship under the 1948 law, but who would no longer qualify under this 1982 law, were also considered associate citizens if they had applied for citizenship in 1948. However, under the new law, applications for associate citizenship had to be made within one year of the promulgation of the law, since then, all former foreigners or stateless persons can only apply for naturalization. A naturalized citizen, according to law, is one who has a parent who was a full citizen and one who was an associate citizen (or is so qualified for citizenship under the 1948 law). But a naturalized citizen must also 'speak well one of the national languages', 'be of good character', and 'be of sound mind'. According to the terms of the law, only full and naturalized citizens are entitled to enjoy the rights of a citizen under the law, with the exception from time to time of the rights stipulated by the State.

Under the new law, few Rohingyas could qualify for full citizenship, and many would not be entitled to either associate or naturalized citizenship, due not only to their individual histories but also to the difficulty of providing legal evidence. Thus, most Rohingyas are only recognized as foreign residents.

Following the promulgation of the 1982 law, all residents in Burma had to reapply for citizenship, exchanging their old identity documents for new ones. In 1989, a further change was made and all residents had to apply for new Citizenship Scrutiny Cards, (in Burmese 'naing-ngan-tha si-sit-ye kat-pya') rather than the old Identity Cards (in Burmese 'hmat-pon-tin'). The new cards are color-coded for easy identification of the citizenship status of the bearer. Pink cards are given to full citizens; blue is for associate citizens and green for naturalized citizens. Foreigners Registration Cards (FRC) are white. The cards are used to control the movement of people internally and to ensure that associate and naturalized citizens and foreigners do not receive benefits to which they are legally entitled. ID cards have to be shown in Burma for the smallest of transaction, and at each of these the card number is noted down, often in triplicate to be sent to the relevant ministries and government departments. This includes buying a bus, boat, train or plane tickets, applying for a place in school; visiting a friend outside one's ward; or applying for any government job.

Although the arrangement between Bangladesh and Burma and between Burma and the UNHCR was that returnees would be granted 'appropriate identification papers', the yellow cards that were provided to the Rohingya returnees simply gave the SLORC/SPDC further justification to mistreat this Muslim minority. The repatriation process agreed to by the UNHCR required that lists of people willing to repatriate, the names of the villages they had left in Burma, and any other identifying information be sent to Burma's Immigration and Manpower Department (IMPD) for verification. After checking with the village LORC, where lists of all householders are maintained, the person or family was then accepted or rejected as a resident of Burma. In some cases, this verification process was very lengthy, especially if the person married while in Bangladesh or if families had become separated

while in the camps. When they arrived back in Burma, the returnees - were photographed in a reception center where their village of origin, number of family members, and other details were verified. For a fee of fifty *kyat*, the returnees received a yellow card identifying them as having returned from another country, but giving them no legal status in Burma. As non-citizens, the SLORC/SPDC can now more legitimately restrict their ability to travel freely within the country and deny them access to government-sponsored health care services and education, and even to employment.

Moreover, extensive recruitment for compulsory labor is one of the main reasons for the influx of refugees in the first half of 1997. Although UNHCR has focused on this issue and has repeatedly intervened with regard to returnees being called for compulsory labor, the SLORC/SPDC authorities agreed to exempt the returnees only for the first two months after their arrival and to limit compulsory labor for the entire population in the area. Rohingyas and other ethnic minorities including the Arakanese and Mro, were forced to work on roads and bridges by the SLORC/SPDC in December 1996 and during the first half of 1997. Local populations in Arakan State are forced to provide physical labor for 7 to 10 days a month without pay. Prisoners in chains and villagers were forced to work on roads from Kyauktaw to Buthidaung and from Sittwe to Kyauktaw in 1997. Because civilians are forced to perform labor for substantial amounts of time, they are often unable to provide for their families. People are subject to compulsory labor ordered by different authorities. The border patrol administration in Arakan State, known as 'Na Sa Ka', were reportedly one of the security forces responsible for seizing laborers.

Confiscation of land and property of the Rohingyas is another violation in the region. In many parts of Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Kyauktaw townships in Arakan State, the military has confiscated land to build roads, military barracks, hydro-electric stations, prawn farms and other commercial activities. In case where land is taken, there is no compensation for the owner and no recourse to law. The authorities in the region ordered the Muslim to move outside of Maungdaw and Buthidaung and move Burmese or Arakanese families into 'model villages' in the wealthiest parts of Muangdaw and Buthidaung.

In addition to these abuses, Rohingyas have also been subject to increasing many forms of taxation since 1992. Every family in northern Arakan State has to pay a chilli tax, regardless of whether they actually grow chilies. As a result, many Rohingyas are forced to buy chilies at the market rate of 500 *kyat*, and sell them to the Nakasa at the government rate of 100 *kyat*. The Rohingya also report that they have to pay a fee when going on to the river to fish and when going to forest to cut bamboo. New arrivals in 1997 said that the taxes had been extended to farm animals; the owners of a cow had pay to 80 *kyat* a year, while a goat was assessed at 30 *kyat* a year. Also, the Rohingyas have to pay for permits to travel from their village to the next, or to the market village to sell whatever produce they may have.

14.10. Situation of Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

At least 300,000 Rohingya refugees arrived in Bangladesh during 1991 and 1992 due to the massive human rights violations occurring in Arakan State, including extrajudicial executions, torture, forced labor and portering. The Rohingya are Bengali-speaking Muslim people from Burma. Some Rohingya refugees describe stories of rape, killings and acts of

religious discrimination in Arakan state. The range and extent of these abuses constitutes widespread repression of the Rohingyas by the SLORC/SPDC security forces, resulting in unprecedented numbers of refugees fleeing the country.

A UN-brokered agreement between Burma and Bangladesh for the 'safe and voluntary return of Rohingya refugees was reached on April 28, 1992, but contained no provisions for impartial screening of the refugees before they went back or for monitoring their well-being afterwards.

In the first repatriation exercise, between September 1992 and the end of 1993, UNHCR was not present in Burma and had no agreement with the Burmese authorities about providing assistance to refugees to return. Later, when the UNHCR was present in Bangladesh, it was unable to stop concerted efforts by the Bangladeshi authorities to force refugees to return home. Among the methods used were beating and the withdrawal of food rations. The vast majority of the 50,000 refugees who returned to Burma did so involuntarily, and it took well over a year before they received any assistance from the UNHCR.

In 1994, during the second repatriation of Rohingya, the UNHCR did establish a presence in Arakan State and promoted mass repatriation on the grounds that it was safe for refugees to return home. In one month alone, September 1994, nearly 14,000 refugees were repatriated. However, the UNHCR failed to interview each refugee individually to ensure that she or he was returning voluntarily. In 1996, approximately 23,000 of the Rohingya Muslims who fled to Bangladesh in 1992 returned to Burma, bringing the total number of returnees to about 220,000.

However, the flight of Rohingyas was not over. Some 10,000 to 15,000 new asylum seekers entered Bangladesh since the end of February 1996. Most of them who described increased forced labor, heavy taxation of Muslims and some instances of rape arrived in the first half of 1997. Local Bangladeshi authorities reported in June 1997 that there was an influx of at least 5,000 Rohingyas in one month alone, stating that 500 of them had been sent back across the border over a two week period. UNHCR and International NGOs were not formally permitted to have access to the new refugees. Those who had relatives or close friends in the refugees camps sometimes tried to live in the camp. However, the Bangladeshi authorities in the camps rooted out new arrivals from the camp and had them charged with illegal entry. Those who did not enter the camps hid in jungle areas or in slums around Cox's Bazaar. Because of the continued human rights violations in the region, some 10,000 Rohingyas entered Bangladesh in 1996, but they were not welcomed by the Bangladeshi authorities. Many of the them were sent back to Burma. On April 20, 1996, fifteen Rohingyas, part of a group of 150 who were seeking asylum in Bangladesh, drowned in the Naf River as they were being towed back to Burma by the Bangladesh Border Rifles. All fifteen were women and young children. This incident brought much-needed attention to the plight of new asylum-seekers in 1996.

The events of the first six months of 1996 repeated in the first six months of 1997 when some 10,000 to 15,000 new Rohingya arrived in Bangladesh. Because these new arrivals did not enter refugee camps but instead stayed in local villages, it is difficult to get the precise numbers. Similarly, they were stopped by the Bangladeshi authorities from entering into Bangladesh. Lt-Col. Khaled Reza, a commander of Bangladesh's border security force stated, "...if caught, we are pushing the infiltrators back or sending them to

jails.” In July 1997, Cox’s Bazaar Police Superintendent, Matiur Rahman, stated that more than 2,000 newly-arrived Rohingyas had been sent back to Burma within the previous few months.

Although the repatriation process was scheduled to be completed by mid-1997, delays in the repatriation process made 21,800 Rohingya refugees remain in the two camps- Nayapara camp and Kutu Palong camp- at the end of June 1997. The SLORC/SPDC delayed the process until July 15, 1997, when they agreed to receive only those of the 21,800 refugees who had been cleared by them by the August 15 deadline. The SLORC/SPDC has agreed to accept only 7,500 of the remaining 21,800 Rohingyas in the camps. The UNHCR has requested the Bangladeshi authorities to allow the remaining 14,300 Rohingyas to settle in Bangladesh. However, with local hostility towards the refugees increasing, and with Islamic fundamentalist elements actively working within the refugee camps, the Bangladesh government refused the offer of increased assistance and resettlement packages to 21,400 caseload of Rohingyas.

Instead, the Bangladeshi government began forced repatriation in 1997. On July 19, 1997, the Bangladeshi security forces entered Nayapara refugee camp in Cox’s Bazaar district intending to arrest refugees cleared by Burma for repatriation. Apparently no one volunteered for repatriation, so the authorities picked mostly women and children to be sent back. The refugees resisted, with some throwing stones, and tear gas was used to quell the protests. 111 refugees, mainly women and children, were held in the camp office overnight and on the next morning, these people along with 76 other refugees were driven in buses to a repatriation point and forced onto boats to be taken to Burma. A partly paralyzed man and a heavily pregnant women were among those taken.

After the refugees from Nayapara Camp were taken by bus to the river, a group in that camp attacked security forces with canes, iron rods, and bows and arrows, who responded by firing shots and lobbing tear gas canisters. As a result, 15-20 people were reportedly injured, including several policemen. A group of refugees was arrested at the time.

The second forcible return took place in July 22, 1997 in Kutapalong camp. There was no resistance by the refugees at that time, but The UNHCR was not allowed access to the refugees. Some 212 refugees were returned on this occasion.

In 1997, the repatriation process stalled when the SPDC refused to accept more than 21,000 refugees. Burmese authorities said they were mostly “economic refugees” hoping for a better life in Bangladesh camps.

However, the repatriation resumed in 1998 after a recent visit to Rangoon in early 1998 by Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad. After several rounds of discussions between Dhaka and Rangoon, the Burmese authorities agreed to take back remaining 7,000 refugees, and according to the latest arrangement between the two countries, 50 refugees in a batch would be repatriated every Wednesday beginning November 25, 1998. In the third week of November 1998, Forty-six Moslem refugees were sent back to Burma from Bangladesh in the first wave of repatriations since they were halted in 1998, government officials said. A group of 46 Rohingya Muslims were seen off by officials of the Bangladesh government and the UNHCR at Teknaf, according to the Bangladeshi officials. However, the repatriation of Rohingya refugees staying in Bangladesh has been stalled again less than one month after. The Burmese authorities conveyed to Bangladesh

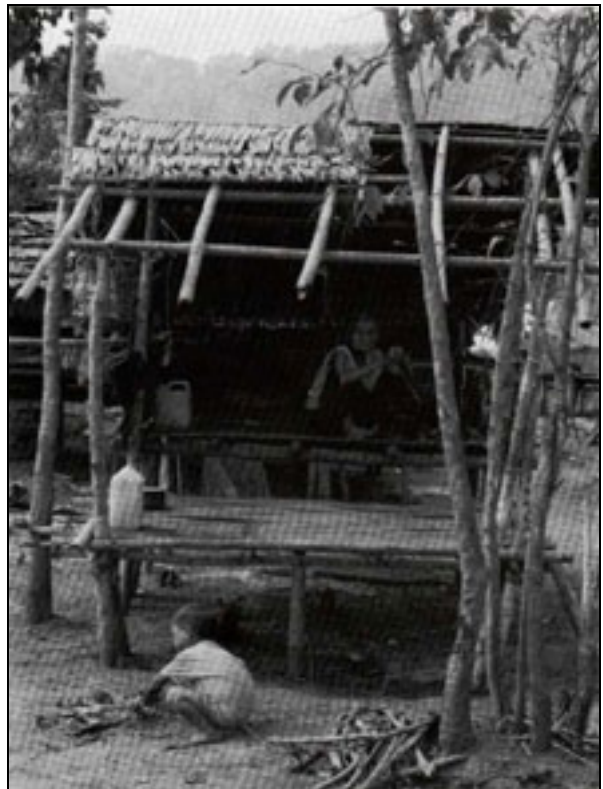
that it could not take back the Rohingya refugees during the Ramadan, the holy month of fasting for Muslims across the world. Bangladesh, on the other hand, insisted that it would continue the repatriation process in accordance with the agreement reached earlier between the two sides. Only 100 refugees had been repatriated so far in 1998 because the nonavailability of permission from the Burmese authorities and the unwillingness of some refugees to return.



Refugee woman with her baby in front of her temporary shelter. (Photo by Aung Myo Min, HRDU)



▲
*Internally displaced villagers
at Meh La Po Hta, a site
adjacent to the Thai border, in
January 1999. (Photo by
KHRG)* ►





Some of the over 90 houses which were blown down in Huay Kaloke refugee camp in the first week of February 1999. (Photo by KHRG) ▲ ▼





Photo shows the collapsed school building (above), where one of the students was killed (below). (Photo by KHRG)



Kyaw Ler Thait, aged 14, Pwo Karen Buddhist from Taun Wih village, Pa'an township, a student at the school in Huay Kaloke. (Photo by KHRG)



A group of Ler Doh township villagers was taking a rest during the dangerous journey of two or more weeks, dodging SPDC patrols and landmines along the way, to reach a refugee camp in Thailand. This group had 28 families totalling 107 people, and arrived in Thailand on 11 January 1999. (Photo by KHRG)





The group of refugees from Ler Doh township arriving on the Thai bank of the Salween River (above). The refugees on arrival at Ban Sala refugee camp in Thailand (below). (Photo by KHRG)





Villagers in southeastern Pa'an district flee through the forest, hoping to reach the border with Thailand. They said they were fleeing because they could no longer bear the forced labour, extortion and random killings of farmers in their area. (Photo by KHRG)



One of the temporary sites of the refugees from Karen State. Those who did not enter the refugee camps in Thailand taking shelter like this situation inside Burma. (Photo by Aung Myo Min, HRDU)



Newly arrived Karen refugees waiting for a screening process by the UNHCR officials in Mae La camp, Tha Song district, Thailand. (Photo by Aung Myo Min, HRDU)



New arrivals of refugees in Mae La camp Tha Song district, Thailand in early 1999. Many of them revealed gross human rights in Papun district, Karen State by the SPDC troops. (Photo by Aung Myo Min, HRDU)



Victims of SPDC's military offensive in 1998 seen at the temporary site inside Burma near Tha Song Yan district, Thailand. (Photo by Aung Myo Min, HRDU)



Refugees are giving medical treatment at the displaced persons' site inside Burma. (Photo by Aung Myo Min, HRDU)

Burmese Border Refugee Sites with Population Figures (July 1999)



PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Notes: Names of people and places have, in some cases, been withheld or changed when deemed necessary to protect the victims, their families, or our information sources; however, the original source documentation contains complete and accurate information. Most of the events described took place in 1996, however, some events occurred in early 1997.

The following keywords describing human rights violations (HRV) have been used to index and cross-reference the report; the keywords appear at the beginning of each interview.

Assembly:	Freedom of assembly and association
Child:	Rights of child
Detention:	Arbitrary detention and enforced or involuntary disappearances
Displacement:	Internally displaced persons
Execution, Killing:	Extra-judicial, summary, or arbitrary executions
Expression:	Freedom of opinion and expression
Forced labor:	Forced labor and slavery
Judicial:	Judicial system and unfair trial
Livelihood:	Rights of livelihood (i.e., pillaging, extortion)
Minorities:	Protection of minorities
Movement:	Freedom of movement
Refugee:	Situation of refugees
Religion:	Freedom of belief
Relocation:	Forced relocation
Repatriation:	Forced repatriation
Slavery:	Forced labor and slavery (i.e., portering)
Torture:	Torture and other cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment
Women:	Discrimination and violations against women

Interview 1: Refugee

Name: "Saw Beh Htoo"
 Sex: Male
 Age: 28
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Marital Status: Married with three children
 Address: Kwih Klay village, Dooplaya district, Karen State
 Date of Interview: February 2, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[When interviewed "Saw Beh Htoo" was staying in a hut just on the Thai side of the border.]

Q: How long did it take you to come here?

A: It took a day. Our village is to the west, near Kyaikdon. I've stayed here for one season, with my brother and sister.

Q: Did the SLORC come to your village?

A: Yes, they came. I was staying in the village when the SLORC came. I stayed about 25 days and then I came here. First I came alone, then I went back and called my family. I don't want to go back because the situation is not good.

Q: How many houses are there in Kwih Kalay village?

A: It has more than three hundred houses. Sgaw and Pwo Karen, Thai and Mon. About a hundred houses are Karen. Several families have come to stay here. The KPA come here all the time. They tell stories to try to get us to go back. They told me to go back to my village. He said, "You can go back, nothing will happen." I told him I won't go back, first I will stay here for 4 or 5 years and then maybe I will go back. I told him that I don't like Burmese soldiers.

Interview 2: Forced Labor, Refugee

Name: "Saw Lay Ghay"
 Sex: Male
 Age: 30+
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Occupation: Farmer
 Marital Status: Married with three children
 Address: Noh Dah Kee village, Dooplaya district, Karen State
 Date of Interview: February 22, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[When interviewed “Saw Lay Ghay” was staying in a hut just on the Thai side of the border.]

Q: When did you arrive here?

A: I arrived here in October 1997, because the SLORC came into our village. After they came I stayed for less than a month. The SLORC told us to do so much for them that we couldn't do our own work, so we came here. Every day the SLORC told us to get rocks from the river and carry them up the hill. Their camp is on the hill, just near Lay Po Hta. We had to go every day to carry rocks. Every man in Noh Dah Kee village had to go every day.

Q: How many houses are in your village?

A: It has eleven houses. We came here with one other household. We came a secret way. Five households are still staying in our village. The SLORC [SPDC] makes the people work for them every day. The people have to carry rice up the hill for the SLORC whenever their rations come. I'm afraid to go back because the SLORC makes us work all the time, there is not enough food and I have no money to buy food. My house was made of bamboo, so I think it is probably destroyed by now. The Thai soldiers told us to go back but I am afraid of the SLORC. I will stay until the SLORC go back to their place. If they go back to their place I will go back to my village.

Q: Will you go back if the SLORC leaves and only the KPA stays there?

A: No, I am afraid to go back because the KPA also works with the SLORC.

Interview 3: Forced Labor, Refugee

Name:	“Saw Htoo Wah”
Sex:	Male
Age:	35
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Dta La Ku, sect group
Occupation:	Farmer
Marital status:	Married with two children
Address:	Kwih Lat village, Dooplaya district, Karen State
Date of interview:	February 20, 1998
Source:	KHRG

[When interviewed “Saw Htoo Wah” was staying in a hut near a Dta La Ku village in Thailand. The Dta La Ku are a minority in Kwih Kler and are sometimes persecuted by other Karens; they wear their hair long, tied in a top knot.]

Q: When did you arrive here?

A: Five months ago. We came because the Burmese persecuted us until we couldn't stay in our own village any more, so we came to live here near our religious center.

Q: How did they persecute you?

A: They forced us to work for them. They told us that they would go just over there [a short distance], but then they made us go for two to three days. They forced us to carry very heavy things. Although we could not carry the things, we had to try hard until we could no longer do. We had to carry bags of cement, bullets, rice and other food. We had to carry anything that they needed us to carry for them. They came and commanded the headman, and the headman called us. Because we love peace and we wanted to live in our village peacefully, we went and obeyed their orders whenever our village headman told us to go. Thirty people from Kwih Lat Der village had to go to do that. One person from each family.

Q: How many houses were there in Kwih Lat Der village?

A: About 30 houses I think. If people had not run away, there would have been more than that. For portering, not only the people from Kwih Lat Der had to go; the people from Kwih Kler, Kwih Chit Mu, Meh Tharaw Hta, and Maw had to go together. There were more than 100 porters on the trip. That trip was the very worst. I didn't count the times I had to go, but it was many times. Sometimes it took one day, sometimes one day and one night. When I was there I had to go two to three days at a time, or three to four days at a time. It was never the same. They told us they would only go for one day, and sometimes they really went for one day. Sometimes they spoke the truth, but often they did not. They always said to us that they would go to a nearby place, but sometimes they went to very far places. From Kwih Lat Der to Htee Hta Baw, from Maw to Kwih Lat Der, K'Yeh Theh to Kwih Lat Der, Kyaw Kwa to Kwih Lat Der.

Q: When did they start ordering you to be porters?

A: Since they started to come. They came last April [1997]. They have been forcing us to work ever since they came. When they arrived in the village all the villagers fled, so they called the villagers back into the village. At first they did not use the villagers as porters, but after the villagers had all been back in the village for a while they started. First they forced us to build buildings for them, then when that was finished they started using us as porters.

Q: Where was the Burmese battalion camp?

A: Their main camp is in Saw Hta [Azin]. They also had a camp in Kwih Lat Der and a camp in Ber Kler. And another in Pu Kler. The big men [senior officers] are living in Saw Hta. Their troops are changing often. One group comes up for two to four months and then they change. Right now [Infantry] Battalion 62 is living there.

Q: Are they building a road in Kwih Lat Der area?

A: Not yet. They're not building a road yet.

Q: Are there any DKBA soldiers in your village?

A: No, the DKBA has already left by now. There are KPA living there. When I was in my village they hadn't come yet, but now they are living in my village. Some people who go back and forth to our village told us that the KPA are in our village, walking around together with Burmese soldiers.

Q: I've heard that more than 2,000 people from Kwih Lat Der and Kwih Kler came to live here, but now more than 1,000 of them have gone back again, so why don't you go back?

A: Some people are still living here and some have gone back. My whole family is here. I won't go back yet, because we are worried about the problems they will make for us. That is why we dare not go back. I'm not sure how long I'll be here.

Interview 4: Forced Labor, Relocation, Livelihood, Refugee

Name: "Pa Boe"
 Sex: Male
 Age: 30
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Dta La Ku sect
 Occupation: Farmer
 Marital Status: Married with four children
 Address: Kwih Kler village, Dooplaya district, Karen State
 Date of Interview: February 20, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[When interviewed "Pa Boe" was staying in a hut near a Dta La Ku village in Thailand.]

Q: Where is your village?

A: My village is Kwih Kler. I guess it takes about three or four hours to walk from here.

Q: How many months have you stayed here?

A: I fled Burma and came here one or two months ago. I came because we had a bad time there, because they forced us to do their work until we had no chance to do our own work. They forced us to do many things such as portering, standing as sentries, and many other kinds of labor. We had to carry bullets for their sentry troops. Many people from Kwih Kler had to go.

Q: Where did you have to go as porters?

A: Sometimes to nearby places and sometimes far away. If they were sentry troops based nearby they would set us free sooner, but if they were going down to the town to change their troops then it would take many weeks. Sometimes they did not tell the truth. If they said that a trip would take two or three days, it really took one to three weeks. Many people had to face that. Some people coughed up blood after they came back from portering. If we had not come here we would still be serving as porters. When they first arrived [in February 1997], we ran away. After that we went back to the village to stay, and we've had to go as porters since then, until just before we came here. Now we do not dare go back.

Q: How many families live in Kwih Kler village?

A: At first there were more than 100 families, but now fewer families are left in the village. Some have left, but some still stay.

Q: Where was the camp of the Burmese who forced you to be porters?

A: In Kwih Kler they had a camp, and we also had to go to their Saw Hta camp. I'm not sure how many soldiers they had because they changed their troops often. They're not the same as Karen soldiers- sometimes they changed once or twice in one month. So I don't know how many soldiers there were. They had many groups. Right now IB 62 is in the village.

Q: Were there other types of labor that you had to do for them?

A: We had to do many kinds of labor for them. We haven't had to build the motor road yet, but we will have to build one. There is a motor road in the village but it is not good.

Q: Were the villages in Kwih Kler area relocated?

A: Some people still stay in the village. Some people such as the Dta La Ku didn't like to stay in the village any more because they couldn't live according to their religion. There were many different kinds of religion in the village, so it was difficult for the Dta La Ku to practice their religion. In the village there were Baptists and Buddhists. The Dta La Ku wanted to go away but the village headman never allowed them to leave the village, so some Dta La Ku tried to run away secretly. Many families came with us, about ten families. In Kwih Kler there were not too many Dta La Ku people but there are still some families left in Kwih Kler. Some Dta La Ku people who came here also went back. Before they went back there were nearly twenty Dta La Ku families [from Kwih Kler] here.

Q: Many people already went back, so why don't you go back?

A: I do not dare to go back because I am afraid of the Burmese. I will go back when there is peace in my village, after the Burmese leave my village, because the Burmese treated us badly.

Q: How can you get your food here? Can you farm here?

A: Yes, we must farm.

Interview 5: Relocation, Livelihood, Refugee

Name:	"Ni Reh"
Sex:	Male
Age:	60
Ethnicity:	Kayah
Religion:	Christian
Occupation	Farmer
Marital Status:	Married with four children but six of them already dead
Address:	Saw So Leh village, Shadaw township, Karenni State
Date of Interview:	March 1, 1998
Source:	KHRG

[“Naw Wah” is married to “Ni Reh”. They were interviewed just after arriving in Thailand on March 1, 1998.]

“Naw Wah”: I lived in Saw So Leh village for 30 years. Two years ago the soldiers ordered the villagers to relocate so we went and stayed in Loikaw township, at Nwa La Bo consolidation village [relocation site] for three months. In Nwa La Bo consolidation village they didn’t give us any food, and they accused my husband of supporting the KNPP. The [Military] Intelligence called him and asked him questions very often, so we fled from Nwa La Bo consolidation village.

“Ni Reh”: We moved to Nwa La Bo consolidation village because the soldiers promised the villagers that they would provide rice, other rations and medicines. But then they only accused me of joining the Karenni rebels [KNPP], so after three months at Nwa La Bo I fled back to my village.

“Naw Wah”: When we reached our village again we saw only a burnt place. The Burmese had burned down the village, so all the houses and rice barns had disappeared. But we had some paddy in the jungle that we had hidden before they burned down the village, so we stayed and hid in the jungle where our food was hidden. We stayed in the jungle for two years.

“Ni Reh”: I didn’t want to go back to Nwa La Bo and I didn’t want to go to the Thai border either, so I stayed in the jungle near my village. Infantry Battalion 54 had burned down the village and they took three buffaloes, one pig, 20 chickens and 500 tins of paddy. In our village over 1,000 tins of paddy and more than 100 buffaloes, pigs, cows and chickens were lost. We ate wild vegetables and fruit and boiled rice for two years in the jungle. If we were sick we had no medicine to treat ourselves so we had to treat ourselves with natural medicines. Now the SPDC soldiers are trying to find us, they started coming to shoot at us very often and they also arrested some other villagers, so we fled to this refugee camp.

“Naw Wah”: The SPDC troops came to the jungle very often, so we had to hide all the time and we were worried that the SPDC soldiers would find us. So we couldn’t make a fire to cook and we were hungry very often. As adults we could bear it, but the children cried when they were hungry so we had to cover their mouths and spank them very often. They couldn’t go to school for two years. We heard that there was a school on the border [in the refugee camps] and we felt pity for our children, so we left our own village and fled to the refugee camp.

Interview6: Arrest, Relocation, Forced Labor, Livelihood, Refugee

Name:	“Mi Su”
Sex:	Female
Age:	25
Ethnicity:	Kayah
Religion:	Christian
Occupation	Farmer
Marital Status:	Single
Address:	Su Leh village, Shadaw township, Karenni State

Date of Interview: March 3, 1998
Source: KHRG

[“Mi Su” was interviewed just after arriving in Thailand at the beginning of March. On arrival she had to be sent to hospital with tuberculosis.]

In 1996 the SLORC forced the villagers to leave our village, so we moved to Nwa La Bo village in Loikaw township. In Nwa La Bo consolidation village [relocation site] the SLORC didn't give us any rations or any medicine, so we fled back to our own village. When I fled back the SLORC arrested my mother and my elder sister, so I kept going back to my village with another sister. When we reached our own village we saw only ashes, so we hid and stayed in the jungle near our village for two years. While we were hiding in the jungle we had no medicine so it was very difficult, but I didn't know how to come to the border so I stayed in the jungle and got tuberculosis.

Q: Why did you flee and come here in the end?

A: Now the SPDC soldiers are looking for the villagers and arresting them, so it is very difficult to stay there and we had to flee here. Now I stay at the refugee camp hospital to get treatment for tuberculosis.

Interview 7: Livelihood, Forced Labor, Arrest, Killing, Relocation, Refugee

Name: “Pa Hla Myint”
Sex: Male
Age: 30 +
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Dta La Ku, sect group
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Kwih Kler village, Dooplaya district, Karen State
Date of interview: February 20, 1998

[This interview was conducted with a group of villagers who had just left Kwih Kler village a few days earlier. In the first part of the interview, “Pa Hla Myint” read from his notes on events that had happened, which he had written on very small and concealable index cards. He kept his notes in the form of a ‘Ta’, a traditional Karen poem. The rhythm of the Ta does not translate into English, so we have translated his words without the rhythm.]

Listen from the beginning to the end please.

At the end of January 1997 we had to flee, we lost our things and our things were destroyed. We became poorer until we were not happy to farm to earn our livelihood. The things we had lost were: 5,300 pounds of salt; 13 baskets full of rice; three big tins of rice; a new bullock cart. After that we went back to our village to live again. When we lived in our house again, we again lost one mat; one big tin of rice; one pot; a pair of slippers; a bottle of kerosene; one basket. Moreover, we had to go and cut bamboo, and make the road

with our own hands. We had to dig out the mud on both sides of the road. We had to cut a lot of bamboo until there was enough to use [to build the SLORC camp]; we had to find bullock carts until we had enough carts. The carts, the cars, the elephants and motor-carts [small three-wheeled tractors] could never rest. After that, in the second week of April, they again needed four bullock carts with four people for one week to go to get the sand and brick to build pagodas. After that they could go back home. We must write down about every occurrence in our notes to tell our neighbors and friends. In Ber Kler which is near the border, they ordered 20 people from Meh Naw Dah to go and carry rice for the Burmese three times. The last time, there were about 300 small sacks of rice which were carried by 48 people. In each sack there were three big tins of rice [50 kg/110 lb]. They used us to carry rice like their slaves.

When IB 231 arrived in our place, they forced the people to build their bunkers, and to carry stones before building the bunkers. They ordered 40 bullock carts from us. We couldn't give 40 bullock carts because we never had them. So we had to gather our money and hire a truck. The weight of the big stones was 1800 pounds. So it was not easy to carry.

The school was still good but they were not satisfied. They ordered us to take off all the zinc [roofing] to build the school in another place. Then the zinc was not enough for the new school. So they ordered every villager to give money to them for the zinc. Each family had to give 400 *kyat*. The poor people who had no money had to borrow from their neighbors or sell their things to give 400 *kyat* to them. So it was a difficult thing for the poor people.

Another thing had to do with the farm-animal traders. They like to buy and sell farm animals because they get a good income, but their problem is that the SLORC disturbs them. At night the SLORC soldiers would arrest the traders. Some traders were clever and hid with their animals in the deep forest, so the soldiers could only arrest some of the traders. The traders who were safe were happy but the traders who were captured by the SLORC soldiers had to pay a lot of money; 10,000 *kyat* to the SLORC soldiers to be free. At night time the traders would not sleep, they would eat myin say [an amphetamine-type drug] and think about what they could do to earn a living. The SLORC stopped them from trading their farm animals. If the SLORC could capture them, they would have to pay 10,000 *kyat* to save themselves. So I don't want my people, my friends, to do this job.

May 13, 1997, Tuesday night.

At 10 o'clock the Burmese showed a movie for the villagers to watch. A few minutes passed by and they turned off the movie projector and shot their guns, and they shot their heavy weapons four times. The shells fell in the village. Two shells exploded but the other two did not. Then they fired Chinese rockets many times [107mm Chinese ground-fired rockets]. Then they said that the villagers were trying to attack them, but actually the villagers didn't do that. They were just looking for a way to attack our religion.

They forced four people to take turns doing sentry duty. The people have to make fences for the SLORC; have to be porters and have to do the work that the SLORC orders them to do. In rainy season Mae Naw Dah River was flooded. They ordered people to go and carry things with their bullock carts. They forced the bullocks to cross the river with the carts, through the flowing river. So the cart and the bullocks started floating away with

the water. The people had to cut off the rope tied around the necks of their bullocks. It took 100 people to help those bulls and carts. In August 1997 Karen people, both Sgaw and Pwo, had to suffer big problems. The problem was going from Meh Tharaw Hta monastery to Htee Hta Baw village. One bag was 1 mer 8 viss heavy [1 viss=1.6 kg, 1 mer = 10 viss; i.e. 18 viss, a total weight of 28.8 kg/63.3 lb]. We had to carry those cement bags. Then we ran away to escape from the problems. So we ran over to Thailand. The Thai soldiers drove us back to Burma which filled us with despair. We went back the first time and it got worse for us. We went back the second time and we reaped our paddy [refugees in this area were forced back to Burma several consecutive times by the 9th Division of the Thai First Army]. Some were finished but some were not finished yet. After three days a land mine exploded and Paw Eh Pa died. He was Dta La Ku sect group. We honored his body by cremating him. He stepped on the landmine when he went to his own crop early in the morning, about half past five on January 3, 1998. Everyone in the village knew about that. His coconut crop became the Burmese soldiers' crop. He had to die for his crop, so we pitied him a lot.

After every harvest the SLORC [SPDC] soldiers don't allow us to dry our paddy, so we villagers are in trouble because we have no rice to eat. We have to go hungry. In 1998 on February 5, we cooked Yah Hu in the big wok [a mixture of sticky rice, sesame, coconut, oil, peanuts and other ingredients turned slowly in a wok until crispy brown as a festive snack; usually done by the whole community together at this one time each year]. But a problem occurred. The monk told us that we all must not eat Yah Hu. He said, "If you want to eat it, go back and cook Yah Hu in your own house". He ordered us to put water on the fire, to blow out the fire and to beat the big jars and pots into pieces. He told us that everyone must bring the food to the monastery. Anyone who did not bring his food would get his name written on a list by the monk. [The SPDC troops had probably ordered the monk to hand over all the 'Yah Hu' to them.] That is the end of my notes.

[Note: in the continuation of the interview below, the 'second man' is another villager from Kwih Kler, and the 'third man' is a village elder in the area.]

Q: When did you leave Kwih Kler and come here?

"Pa Hla Myint": Three days ago. Right now the Burmese are doing nothing. It is better than it was in rainy season. Now the problem is for the Dta La Ku people. Dta La Ku can't carry weapons and become soldiers. Everyone knows that we do not make good soldiers. First they came to make the family list [of all families in his village]. But after we gave them our family information, they changed our family list to the KPA list. Thirty-one households of Dta La Ku put their family names on the list but later they said that it was not a family list but a Peace Army list. They said the families who are on their list must become soldiers. So we bravely stood up to them and told them that we would never enter into the Peace Army. We told them, "If you want to kill us, we agree to die, but we can't do their 'peace' work." They needed us to become soldiers. They would teach us through their training, they would give us guns. So we said that we couldn't do work which involves carrying weapons and shooting people. "If you kill us we agree to die." We don't want to go into battle. So they got angry with us and told us that they would report us to Than Shwe and the UN. We said: "do as you like, if you want to report to Than Shwe, we don't mind

[Than Shwe is Chairman of SPDC].” If you want to kill us we will let you kill us, but we must not go into battle in our lifetime. That is our problem.

Second man: Lone Shwe [a KPA officer] said that if we don’t do as the others do, it means we are their enemies. Yes, he said that.

Third man: First the KPA told us that they wanted to know how many families of Dta La Ku are in each village: Kwih Kler, Maw, Kwih Lat Der and Kyaw Kwa. They needed to know how many men 40 years old and above there were, and how many men and boys between 15 and 40 years old. After they obtained this information they told us that every male person between 15 and 40 years old must become a KPA soldier. They hadn’t told us that at first. That is why we are not happy.

“Pa Hla Myint”: To get people into the KPA they didn’t say that people must become KPA, they just said that they wanted to know how many families there are in each village and how old the people are. After that, they said that men 15 to 40 years old must become KPA. Only the Dta La Ku. They will take everyone, because they already know our number and our ages.

Third man: After that when they started to collect the names for soldiers, they lied to us by saying that many Dta La Ku people from Maw already joined the KPA, and when they came to Kwih Lat Der they said that many people from Kwih Kler had already joined. The people from Kwih Lat Der and Kwih Kler couldn’t understand anything that was going on. Only when we met each other and talked together did we know that no one had wanted to join and that they had lied to us. They said, “People who won’t obey our orders must be our enemies.”

Second man: Because of this 43 Dta La Ku people from Maw and 12 people from Kwih Lat Der joined the KPA at first. The KPA said that people who did not join the KPA like the others already had must be their enemies.

Q: Do you think that KPA and KNLA are fighting each other now?

Third man: If the KNLA comes and shoots them, I’m sure that they will shoot the KNLA back. If you have a gun then others will think you are their enemy, and everyone wants to shoot you. That’s why we don’t want to carry guns. I want to say this. If you are not carrying weapons and I’m not carrying weapons, we see each other and sit together and talk to each other in peace. If you and I are both carrying weapons, then it is not easy for us to sit together. We will have to be afraid of each other and stay far from each other. If neither of us has weapons, we don’t need to be afraid of each other, we will sit closely and talk to each other. So it is not easy for us to answer [groups which ask them to take sides]. If we carry weapons, the other groups will think about us, “Are they our enemy?” And then they dare not come to sit with us. So we don’t want to do bad things like that. Real peace is to sit together like this.

Q: How many KPA soldiers do you think there are now?

Third man: The KPA is really quite new so there are no more than 300 soldiers who have

passed the training. Most people are not interested in the KPA. There were 12 people from Ker Kee village who joined. The KPA recruits have already gone for training now, but none of the Dta La Ku people have gone. We already held a meeting with them and told them that the Dta La Ku can't become soldiers. They reported it to the Burmese operations commander, but he told them, "I won't crush the Dta La Ku by forcing them to join the army, because they are practicing their religion which prohibits holding arms." But the KPA leader said that the people who live in this area must not remain separate from the KPA. He never agrees with the operations commander. So the Burmese commander told him, "I can't do it, but if you can do it, go ahead." The KPA commander said he would go ahead. We are angry with him because he is our own race. When we went for a meeting with him the other day, they talked about the militia, nothing else. They said the Dta La Ku must join the KPA or its militia.

Q: How do the KPA get bullets and food?

Third man: They get all of them from the Burmese. They have their own camp at Saw Hta [Azin]. Their headquarters used to be the Saw Hta women's office [the Karen Women's Organization, connected to the KNU, had its office there before the SLORC occupation in February 1997].

When they called the first meeting to build up the KPA, they explained that the villages along Ser Yah Kloh and Ta May Kloh [rivers] belong to the KPA and the Burmese, so they said they will develop the villages there to become towns. They will develop the road so they can travel in all seasons. They will do logging, and they said they will share the money with the villagers. They said they will destroy the KNU because it gives problems to the SLORC and makes villagers become soldiers. They said if there is no KNU there will be peace in the area, so if we see some KNU people we must send them to the KPA to become KPA.

Q: Are the Burmese or KPA working on the motor roads?

Third man: In Saw Hta they're working on the motor road, but they haven't finished it to Kwih Kler yet. They came up from Rangoon and Moulmein to Kya In Seik Gyi, then on to Ber Kler and the border. The children counted 31 trucks but we heard that the number is really more than that. We heard 50 to 60 trucks were coming. Thirtyone trucks reached the border so far. Five of them were four-wheel drives; three of those carried Burmese soldiers, and two of them carried KPA. We heard that the new road will go to Kyo G'Lee and Kwih Ta Khoh. They've brought 500 prisoners to help them. They brought them from the jails in town. They're using both machines and people to build the roads.

Q: I heard that the SPDC wants to build a road from Saw Hta to Htee Hta Baw.

Third man: Yes, they have plans but it has not started yet. They will start at Kya In Seik Gyi and build to Saw Hta and Ber Kler. They also want to build an all-season road to Htee Hta Baw. I heard that they'll need 500 people to build that road, but we haven't seen it yet.

Q: Have you heard any news from Htee Hta Baw area [further south, toward the Three Pagodas Pass]?

Third man: Many of the villages have been destroyed between here and there, such as Htee

Mu Ku, Lay Wah Chut, Kyaw Kwa, and Kyay Loh Neh. There are no people in Htee Hta Baw, Htee Po Chut and Htee Po Maw. The SPDC stays around there now. It is in Waw Raw township. Down there the people still stay in the villages near the Thanbyuzayat road [to the Three Pagodas Pass], but I heard that they have many problems. They have to be afraid of both SPDC and KNU.

Q: Do the SPDC stay in Kwih Lat Der now?

Third man: Yes, they are camped in Kwih Lat Der right now. They have about thirty or forty troops. Their Battalion number is 62. They stay with the KPA. There are four KPA there. Those KPA used to be KNLA soldiers, but then the SLORC arrested them and they went to be DKBA for a while, and now they have become KPA and they stay with the SPDC troops. There are about 47 houses in Kwih Lat Der. Some villagers are still staying there; for example, if there are four or five people in a family then maybe two or three of them have fled to Thailand and the others are still in Kwih Lat Der. Now our people are in a terrible situation from all sides. We must be afraid of the Thais as well as the Burmese.

Q: How do you feel to stay here?

“Pa Hla Myint”: It’s nice for us to stay here but the problem is food. If we had enough food here we would never go back to our village to see their faces again.

Second man: The people from here sent us back to our village because they didn’t have food to share with us. We’d rather not go back. We’ll try to live here and just go back to our village to get our food stocks and bring them here.

“Pa Hla Myint”: The people from our village taunt us, they say, “Look, the squirrels are coming to steal food. They are thieves.” They call us “squirrels” because of our hair. We feel upset to hear that, but we pretend that we don’t hear. We go on and retrieve our food.

Second man: You can call us thieves, but we never steal other people’s things. We only go back to take our own food from our own farms.

Q: Do you want to say anything else?

“Pa Hla Myint”: What I really want to say is that I want our brother Burmese to keep the Dta La Ku together in a safe place which is free from portering, forced labor and battle. We don’t want to be soldiers. I can’t understand why they don’t let us have a place like that. Burma is very big and I think that in such a big land there must be a safe place for us somewhere. But we can’t ask them for it because there are no educated people among us who can go and ask them. I hope our English brothers will help us by saying that for us. We are hoping for help from our English brothers.

Interview 8: Livelihood, Forced Labor, Relocation, Arrest, Torture

Name:	“Saw Lah Htoo”
Sex:	Male
Age:	24

Ethnicity: Karen
 Occupation: Farmer
 Marital Status: Married no children
 Address: K'Ma Kler village, Dooplaya district, Karen State
 Date of interview: February 22, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[“Saw Lah Htoo” fled his village during the 1997 SLORC offensive and now works in a shop in the Thai Karen border village of Ber Kler, immediately opposite a major SPDC Army base.]

Q: Do you know the news from Kyaikdon?

A: Yes, I know. I hear the news because the traders came and told me. The Burmese are assessing the value of the land of everyone who lives in Kyaikdon. Some plots cost 50,000 *kyat*, and some cost 30,000 *kyat*. On the expensive pieces of land, the roofs of the buildings must be zinc. Everyone has to buy their land back from the SPDC. For example, if they appraise my land for 50,000 *kyat* I must buy it from them for 50,000 *kyat*.

Q: How much land do you get for 50,000 *kyat*?

A: I don't know the exact measurements, but it is just enough to build an ordinary house.

Q: Do the people who stayed in Kyaikdon and never fled also have to buy their own land back?

A: Yes, they have to buy it. People who never had land can also buy it for the same price, so they are actually better off than the landowner, because they didn't own the land before. At K'Mah Kler, the SPDC came and took all the betelnuts and coconuts. The villagers couldn't get any money for it because the SPDC took them all. They also took all the chickens. If the villagers tried to stop them they showed them a knife or a gun.

Q: Do the villagers have to do any forced labor?

A: Yes, the Burmese force the villagers to do things. The villagers have to give money to buy petrol and oil because the Burmese are building a road with machines but they say they have no petrol, so the villagers have to give them money to buy the petrol. Villagers who don't have any money to give have to build the road. They are improving the road from Kyaikdon to [Kya In] Seik Gyi.

Q: Can the villagers in that area stay in their villages or are they forced to move?

A: The people in Kyaikdon do not need to move because their village is big. But a woman just came a few days ago and told us that the Burmese forced them to move from Meh Naw Dah Hta to Kwih Kler because there were only a few houses in her village, but she never moved. She said, “I have my house here so I will stay here.” The others moved but she alone stayed behind. The Burmese stole her hammock.

Q: Do the people still stay in the villages just across the border here?

A: Yes, there are villagers there. The Burmese don't torture them but they steal the villagers'

chickens and other things. They don't torture them because they are afraid that the villagers living near the border will run to Thailand.

Q: Where are the SPDC camps?

A: They have a camp here at the border and another one at the old headquarters gate [near Kwih Kler, an hour away]. There are also camps at Meh Tharaw Kee and Ywa Plaw. The Battalions are No. 545 and No. 62.

Q: Can the villagers move around freely?

A: They can move around, but they need a movement paper. They have to ask permission from the SPDC officers. It depends on the officer. If the villagers need to go somewhere for five days then they have to ask permission for five days. Usually they can get passes for three days. For one pass they have to pay 50 baht. Villagers come here often from Kyaikdon, Saw Hta, Meh Dah Hta, Meh Dah Kee, Kwih Kler, Th'Ray Kee, and Kyaw Kee. They come in passenger cars and on foot.

Q: Can the villagers prepare their fields?

A: No they can't, because they have to build the road and do other forced labor. The Burmese have ordered them to work on the road to make it much better. Each person has to go to work for them for five days, then come back to his own work for two days. You have to work very hard, because you only get two days to work for yourself and then you have to do five days' work for them.

Q: Do you think more people will flee to Thailand?

A: They couldn't survive there [in Burma] but they don't want to come here, firstly because they have their own land and possessions to think about, and secondly because the Thais don't allow them to come. It's not easy for them to come.

One man who came here and went back home was caught by the Burmese and they tied him up, hung him in the air and then lit a fire under him. He didn't die because he had good medicine. Now he stays in Thay Pu Law Htwee. People don't want to go back [to Burma]. I ask them why. They say that they don't want to carry [loads as porters] any more. If people come here the SPDC collects tax from them [along the way]. If they stay there the SPDC tortures them and takes their things. Some people stay there just because the KPA tells them to stay, or because they decide to join KPA. The SPDC controls that group of people. They created it as a new group. The KPA sent people here to Noh Po [refugee camp] and said that the SPDC is asking us to go back because the SPDC will give us peace. They said if we go back we will get peace for sure. It is not for sure at all, and they cannot get peace for us that way.

Now they want to get more KPA members. They told people that if they join the KPA they won't have to do anything, that if we join the KPA the Burmese won't abuse us or use us for forced labor and we can stay freely. They said if you join they will mark your house and no one there will have to do forced labor. Now they are gathering people and giving training.

Q: Does the DKBA stay in this area?

A: No, they don't stay here any more because the KPA told them to leave. The KPA aren't afraid of the SPDC, the SPDC gave power to them so they think they can do everything, but one day the SPDC will take the guns back from them, I'm sure of it. If all the people go back to Burma then the SPDC will take back the guns from both the KPA and the DKBA. They just want the KPA and DKBA to attack people in Thailand until everyone comes back, then they will take back all their weapons. The KPA and DKBA don't like each other.

Q: Do you think people can all go back to Dooplaya and live there peacefully soon?

A: No. We can't survive there. People who live in Burma are not happy to stay, some say that if the KNU fights the SPDC then they will fight the SPDC too. They should give people rights and democracy. If there is no democracy we will be their slaves forever. Whatever they tell us to do we must do, if they say don't move we must not move, if they say we must die then we die. We cannot live like that. We've been here for one year now. When No. 44 Division came to our village we fled to escape it and came here. If the SPDC stays there forever then we will stay here forever. We don't like our lives here but at least we live our lives.

Q: What about here, you said that the Burmese came and took one old woman's betelnut!

A: The SPDC soldiers came and took betelnut from Ber Kler on the Thai side. They climbed right up people's trees and took the fruit. Then the headman told them not to come and steal like that so they didn't come again. [There is a major new SPDC army base directly across the border from Ber Kler. At the time of the interview SPDC soldiers in mufti were crossing the border and hanging around the village every day.] They came and stole the betelnut, then they sold it to other people because they have no money. The Thai soldiers did nothing, they just said they wouldn't allow the SPDC to come any more but the SPDC soldiers still come very often. They come every day, they even come to my shop with pistols. They wear simple clothes like ours but they come with pistols. It is the officers who carry the pistols.

Q: What do the Thai soldiers do if they see the pistol?

A: The Thais don't do anything because they are very afraid.

Q: What do the SPDC soldiers usually buy here?

A: They usually buy alcohol and clothes. They come and sell charcoal and cattle. If they get money they buy fish and chicken to eat. It is the privates who burn the charcoal, because they have no money. But the officers get their money from the villagers. For example, if people come here to buy things they have to pay the officer 10,000 *kyat* as tax. People who come to sell cattle have to give them 200 baht for each cow. Here 10 *kyat* is worth 1.5 baht, but they usually pay in baht.

Q: Do the SPDC soldiers make much trouble here?

A: When they come we have to be careful and watch them every second because they steal things, they steal from every shop if they get the chance or if you're not looking for a moment. When they come they carry bags, they ask to see something and while you're

getting it they try to slip other things into their bag. They also try to steal money from people. Their officer says nothing about it. Two weeks ago one officer came to sell some charcoal, then he drank alcohol together with some villagers. He wanted more to drink but the shopkeeper wouldn't give it to him, and he beat the shopkeeper. Later the Ber Kler headman told him to go back.

Q: Do you think the Burmese would like to capture Ber Kler?

A: Yes, for sure. People here are afraid. There are [Thai] soldiers but they never say anything because they are too afraid. Sometimes they drink with the Burmese officers.

Q: I heard the Thai officers say that many more SPDC troops have come. Is it true?

A: Yes it is true. Two new divisions came, and they also brought so much food that it should be enough for one year. I don't know exactly how many soldiers came.

[Another man from Dooplaya, "Pa Lah", 35, married with two children, added the following:]

The SPDC said that if the KNU comes and shoots at them, they will attack and burn Noh Po [refugee camp]. They've said that many times now. Their officers say it to the villagers. Also, all the Muslims around Saw Hta and Kyaikdon must become Buddhists, because if they don't the SPDC says they will kill them. They already beat one foolish [mentally handicapped] Muslim man. Many Muslims used to stay in Pa Klaw Nee village, near Kyaikdon, but now they've had to move. They can stay near Kyaikdon, but they have to become Buddhist. So now there are many Muslims pretending to be Buddhists.

[One month later on March 24, we interviewed shopkeeper "Saw Lah Htoo" again about new developments:]

A car was just destroyed by a bomb, just above Kwih Kler. It happened this week, on Sunday [March 22]. It was a bomb buried in the ground [a vehicle mine laid along the road by the KNLA]. I don't know exactly whose bomb it was. The car blew into two parts. A child died and the driver was hurt in his chest. The child was about nine years old. His village was Taw Wah Law.

Q: After that happened did the Burmese do anything?

A: The Burmese didn't do anything. I didn't hear anything from the Burmese.

Q: Do the villagers from Dooplaya still come and pay visits here, in Ber Kler?

A: The villagers still come to visit but it is very difficult for them to get a pass, and now they can't come by car, they must come on foot. I think maybe they are worried that bombs will explode and destroy the cars. Usually about 10 people come at a time, but not all from the same village. They come from villages such as Saw Hta, Meh Kwih, Kyaikdon and from the villages near the border.

Q: What news have the people from Kyaikdon brought this month?

A: Now the people there must carry rations for the Burmese. If a villager has a vehicle he

must use it to carry rations for the Burmese. If the car is destroyed by a bomb the Burmese won't do anything for him, he must take care of it himself.

Q: The car that was destroyed this week, was that a villager's car or the army's car?

A: It was a villager's car carrying rations for the Burmese. Now the Burmese use the villagers' cars to transport their supplies because they think the KNLA will not shoot at the villagers' cars but they would shoot at the Army's cars. [In the area the SPDC officers use villagers for transport, calculating that this will decrease the chance of landmine attack or ambush, that if the road is mined villagers will die instead of his men, and also so that they can keep or sell off fuel supplies for personal profit.]

Q: Do the villagers have to help the Burmese every day?

A: Yes, every day. They have to do forced labor on road construction, one person from each house all the time, and the people who have cars must wait around to drive for the Burmese whenever they need them and wherever they want to go. But these car owners must buy the petrol themselves. The Burmese never buy the petrol for them.

Q: Do the villagers still have to work on the car road?

A: They have to build the main roads and also rebuild the streets in Kyaikdon. They have to improve the roads and streets, the Burmese are digging the earth with bulldozers in the betelnut plantations, they are destroying all the betelnut trees but they never pay anything to the villagers. The villagers even have to buy the fuel for their bulldozer! They never buy their own fuel.

Q: Last month you said all the villagers in Kyaikdon must buy their own land, is that still true?

A: Yes, every villager had to buy their own land. They each had to pay 30,000 to 50,000 *kyat*. People had to sell their belongings to get the money to pay for their land. And on land which is 50,000 *kyat* [in the central part of the village] they ordered that the owners must put zinc roofing on their houses. As for the betelnut plantations, if the owner stays close by they can get the fruit, but if not then the KPA takes all of it. They also demand taxes on all the crops. The KPA took all the houses and crops of everyone who fled to Thailand, and they sold those houses. The KPA are staying together with the Burmese. The KPA are staying in K'Ma Kler. The Burmese are also staying there, but in their own camp. They work together.

Q: Does the KPA force anyone to become soldiers?

A: Yes, two or three people from each village must go. If people can't go then they must give money to the KPA. Now the KPA is doing training at Kwih Kalay, below Kyaikdon. Just a few days ago we heard that some KPA soldiers already ran away to escape the army. The KPA is helping the Burmese.

Q: How do they help the Burmese?

A: They help them by planning how to attack Noh Po [refugee camp]. We heard that the KPA and the Burmese will go to attack Noh Po camp. Maybe they will go together.

Q: Are there any DKBA in the area of Kwih Kler, Saw Hta and Kyaikdon?

A: No, there are no DKBA there. All the DKBA moved back to 7th Brigade area [Pa'an District, 100 km further north; the SPDC ordered the DKBA back after it gave authority over most of Dooplaya to the KPA].

Q: Do you think the Burmese will attack Noh Po?

A: As I told you before, they are looking for a way to attack Noh Po. The Burmese told the villagers in Saw Hta that they will attack Noh Po. They've been telling them for a long time that Noh Po will be attacked. [Part of the reason for this may be to discourage Dooplaya villagers from fleeing to Thailand to stay in Noh Po.]

Q: Who will attack, the Burmese or the KPA?

A: The method of the Burmese is that even if they attack, they will always say it was the KPA or DKBA who did it. They will never say it was the Burmese. Even if KPA or DKBA won't go with them the Burmese will still say it was KPA or DKBA, because they will just mimic the DKBA or the KPA when they attack.

Q: If they go to attack Noh Po, do you think they will make problems for Ber Kler villagers along the way? [Ber Kler is over 10 km from Noh Po, but it is along one possible attack route.]

A: They probably won't make problems for the Ber Kler villagers. But last month they told us that if we shelter any refugees from Noh Po or KNLA soldiers then they will shoot at Ber Kler. They also said that if they know any KNLA are coming to Ber Kler they will kill them here.

Q: How can they attack Noh Po if the Thai soldiers stop them?

A: We can't trust Thai soldiers. They do not dare to shoot. They will never shoot, even when their duty is to shoot.

Q: Do Burmese soldiers still now come to Ber Kler village?

A: Yes, they come every day. They still come to buy food. The Thais [soldiers and Border Patrol Police] don't dare to say anything against them. They're always watching when they come to do shopping. I see their corporals and sergeants coming with them and observing the situation. Last month I saw pistols on their waists every time they came. The day before yesterday one of the Thai villagers here left a gun in the back of his truck, and a Burmese soldier stole it. I'm not sure what, I think it was a pistol. Then the gun owner told the headman, they went to ask for the gun and they got it back.

Q: Now there are Thai soldiers everywhere near here and they say they will fight the Burmese if they cross into Thailand. Are the Thais in the village here part of the army or the Border Patrol Police?

A: They are border police. They just sit at their gate which is by the border. They don't dare go into the forest. They're even afraid to stay here in the village! They're not brave.

Q: Do the villagers who come here from Kwih Kler, Saw Hta and Kyaikdon still want to

stay in their villages, or do they want to flee to Thailand?

A: They would prefer to live in their own villages. It is not easy for them to flee to Thailand. The problem if they come here is that the Thais will drive them back to Burma. The Thais already drove many of them back once when they came last time. So although they must live as slaves in Burma and they don't like to live like that, they must live that way. But if the KNLA go to their places to fight the Burmese, they will still help the KNLA to shoot the Burmese. That is what they think in their minds and in their hearts. They really hate the Burmese, and they can't live their lives in either Thailand or Burma. So if the KNLA go to fight many of them will stand up to fight too. But if the KNLA don't go to help them they don't dare do anything by themselves, because the Burmese will kill them.

Last month my sister came and told us that a Burmese soldier came into the movies. He touched a girl's chin and the girl slapped him. Then he slapped the girl who slapped him. Afterwards he was sent to the commander to be punished. And in a shop in Saw Hta a Burmese corporal stole a longyi [sarong] when the shopkeeper wasn't looking and ran away with it. The shopkeeper sent her child to go and get it back but the child couldn't get it, so his mother went to the corporal and shouted at him, and only then she got it back. They do bad things. Now they are logging around Saw Hta, sawing the logs into timber and sending it to the towns to sell. The villagers have to do that for them, and the villagers have to press sugar cane for them when they want to drink it. Many villagers have to go and do that. Everyone is afraid of them and dares not say anything. When they order the villagers to give them chickens and the villagers don't agree, they point at the villagers with guns or knives. They always threaten the villagers like that.

Even when we were in our house [just after the occupation, before they fled] they came to our house and demanded chickens. We let them take what they wanted, but when their sergeant came with a big truck he saw our coconuts and took the coconuts without asking permission. Then he went and took his soldiers' gun and shot at the coconuts [in the tree] to destroy them. They never ask for anything nicely, and if you speak they tell you, "You are very clever to speak, so I will kill you." They threatened people and said, "Now you are in our hands. If we decide to kill you, you can't do anything." They oppressed us until we couldn't stand it anymore, so we came here. If we could stand it we would still live there. If the Burmese live there forever we will live here forever, here in Ber Kler, we won't go back. We don't want to go back before there is peace in Burma, but we will go back when there is peace, when Burma becomes a democratic country.

Interview 9: Refugee, Livelihood, Killing

Name:	"Saw Lah Po"
Sex:	Male
Age:	25
Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married, 1 child aged 21/2 months
Address:	Wangka village, Myawaddy township; now in Huay Kaloke refugee camp
Date of interviewed:	March 15, 1998

Source:

KHRG

[Saw Lah Po's house is in Section 1, right on the eastern edge of the camp where the main attack force entered. This side of the camp faces Thailand, not Burma; the attackers were brought by truck all the way around the camp to the Thai side to launch their attack.]

Q: What happened that night?

A: It was March 10 at 12:30 [at night; actually March 11] when they came into the camp. We heard the noise of a car but we could not see exactly. First I heard dogs barking. Then the soldiers arrived on the other bank of the stream but they hadn't started shooting yet; they were lining up and setting up their mortars. When I saw them, we started to run and then they saw us and they fired their guns. They fired guns first and then the shells of big weapons started to land. Then the soldiers separated themselves into two groups in front of my house. There were more than 10 soldiers in each group. They started to burn the houses as soon as they entered the camp. I told my family, "Don't take anything, run!" I ran off with my wife and my child. My wife did not have time to put her slippers on and neither did my mother-in-law. I couldn't carry anything, not even our blankets. They fired a lot with guns and then they fired big weapons. A shell landed near the hospital just in front of us, so we turned left. We ran into the bed of the stream and stayed there. We dared not come back so we stayed there until the shooting stopped. Then we came back.

Q: Do you think they were DKBA?

A: We dared not look. We ran off so we don't know, but I think the Burmese and the DKBA were mixed together.

Q: Did you see Thai soldiers?

A: This time we didn't see them, they didn't come here. That night they didn't come to our side of the camp.

Q: Did you see anyone killed or injured?

A: In Section 2 one pregnant woman was hit by a shell so she couldn't move, and then she burned to death in the fire. Her name was Ma Pein, we called her Daw Pein, she lived in Section 2. She was over 30 years old. She had one child. Now the child stays with his father. She was dead but her husband didn't know if she was dead or alive. The fire burned her so badly he couldn't recognize her, but when he saw her sarong he knew that it was his wife. In Section 2, two people died - the other was a child, who was wounded in the head. He died in the hospital, so we didn't see him. His name was Pa Lah Ghay. I don't know exactly how old he was, maybe three or four years old [sic: he was 7, and he died en route to hospital].

My mother was also wounded. She was wounded in the back by a shell. It was in Section 2. I think it was not a M79 grenade that hit her, it was a shell from a mortar, a 21/2 inch shell. They fired the mortar from near the mango tree. Now she is in the hospital but she can talk, she is not in a coma. She won't stay too long in the hospital. She will come back and stay here. My mother's name is Paw Nay. She is in her fifties.

Q: Where do you live now?

A: Now I live in the field [the open field in the middle of the camp] because the camp leaders told us to live there. At night time we sleep here but we are afraid. The Thai soldiers don't stay anywhere near where we are staying. We have to look out for ourselves, and if we see anything strange we have to get ready to run. We dare not stay here.

Q: If the Thai soldiers say that you have to move to Beh Klaw or to Burma what will you do?

A: If I must go to Burma I won't go, I dare not go. I also dare not go to Beh Klaw now, the situation there is not good.

Interview 10: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name: "Naw Eh"
 Sex: Female
 Age: 38
 Ethnicity: Sgaw Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married, 3 children
 Address: Kyet Paun village, Hlaing Bwe township, Pa'an district; now in Huay Kalo
 Date of interviewed: March 15, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[Naw Eh's house is in Section 7, beside the main gate which faces west toward Burma. The initial 'reconnaissance' group entered the camp past her house, while the main force attacked from the opposite side of the camp. Her house was in one of the few parts of the camp which were not burned.]

Q: When and how did they come to the camp?

A: First on March 10 at ten or eleven o'clock at night, a Thai soldier came into the camp with a motorcycle. He wore civilian clothes with military trousers. He went to see the section leader, whose name is Pyay Kyaw. Then he went into the camp and after he came back he stopped and told us, "Stop weaving your roof because it is too dark, go to sleep." [They were in their house making leaf shingles to repair their roof.] Then I went to sleep with my daughter, and after a while a truck went past, between some motorcycles. There were three motorcycles in front of the truck and four behind. The car looked like a military car but it looked like an old one. It was green with stripes you could see it because it was full moon. It was very big, like a military truck. It could contain 20 people, and it was full of soldiers. They were all wearing shirts with two pockets, striped [camouflaged] uniforms and they had guns. They came from the main road to Wangka [the border], from the direction of the two Thai gates. They had to pass through the main gate. After that this road goes to all the sections, it goes to Section 1, Section 2, Sections 4, 6, and 8...

When I saw the truck I couldn't sleep, I was afraid that maybe it was DKBA or

Burmese soldiers. The Thai had told the section leader that the situation was not so good, and when I went to my friend's house he'd also told me that the situation was not so good. The truck stayed in the camp about half an hour, and after I'd been asleep for just a moment it came back. Now there was only one person on each motorcycle and three people in the cab of the truck. I didn't see the others. When they came there were no lights on the truck but the motorcycles had their lights on, and there were three soldiers on each motorcycle. When they came back there was one person on each motorcycle and only the first motorcycle had its lights on. Also, they were noisy when they came but when they went back they were silent [she indicated that on their way into the camp they were revving their engines, but on the way back they were idling and going slowly]. A few minutes after they came back, the electric lights at the Thai checkpoint turned off, and after that the shooting started.

After the Thai soldiers [on the motorcycles; she believes that they were Thai] had been away for a while we heard the gunshots and we fled. They fired mortars and guns, all together. I couldn't do anything, I just called my daughter and told her, "Run, run, where is your father?" We couldn't do anything, I was with my daughter but my husband was on security duty that night. They have to guard, 10 persons each night [Refugees have their own camp security patrols].

We heard explosions from Section 1 and Section 4, we were afraid and we ran. They fired big weapons and guns. I heard the sound of heavy weapons over there and over there [pointing all around]. They fired shells across our section and they landed in the bean field. Maybe some landed in the camp, I don't know. We were afraid. When we ran into the field a shell landed in front of us and we ran quickly. We shouted, "Run, run!" Some were shouting, some were running, some were crying, some were running but they had no sarong. We ran to the school in Section 7 and continued on to Thai Huay Kaloke [the Thai village beside the camp]. I fled to the Thai village and my legs were shaking.

After their guns had been firing for a while my husband came back home carrying his rice. He put it down on the ground and ran without it to the Thai village. When he arrived at the Thai village he said he didn't know if the shooters were Thai or Burmese. I don't know myself if they were Thai or Burmese soldiers. They were wearing striped [camouflaged] uniforms and their hats looked like Burmese soldiers' hats.

When the camp was burning I stayed in the Thai village because no one was going back so we dared not go back. The Burmese and the DKBA went back at 2 a.m. and we went back to the camp at 5 a.m. When the explosions stopped my husband and some people went back to the camp but I dared not go back.

Q: Did you see the Thai soldiers when you ran?

A: Yes, I saw the Thai fire engine. Before the burning we didn't see the Thai soldiers in the camp, but after the burning they came in groups of 10. The other truck and the motorcycles did not come back after the soldiers had finished shooting.

Q: Do you think that when the truck first came the Thai soldiers were staying at the checkpoint?

A: I don't know, maybe they knew that the DKBA and the Burmese soldiers would come. When they were coming the Thai said to me, "The situation is not so good so don't weave your roof. It is the time to sleep, why don't you sleep?" Maybe they had an agreement with

the DKBA and the Burmese soldiers. I dare not speak about that. We are afraid of the Thai soldiers.

Q: Do you think that this time the Burmese soldiers came with DKBA?

A: Yes, I think they were Burmese and DKBA. They said, "Within three days you all have to go back to Burma. If you don't go back we will come again and kill all the people". A woman who stays in Section 1 told me that. So that whole night we were afraid [the third night after the attack]. We were afraid, we were shaking and we thought that we would die, and that night the Thai soldiers said, "No one can go outside the camp to sleep. If you go outside the camp the Thai police will come and attack you and send you back to Burma". The Thai soldiers asked, "Why do you go to sleep outside the camp?" [Many refugees wanted to spend the night in the fields outside the camp.] But the [refugee] section leader said, "Those refugees who want to go and sleep outside the camp can do so." We didn't know if the DKBA and the Burmese soldiers would come again. We were afraid of the DKBA but we were also afraid of the Thai soldiers, so we dared not go outside the camp to sleep. We fled over near to the school and hid there. The mosquitoes and the insects bit us, we slept like that and the cars came. Three cars came, the first had its lights on and the others had no lights. They looked like the car which came three days before. I don't know if they looked like Thai cars or Burmese cars because I have never seen a Thai car. But the car that came the first day and the cars that came three days after looked the same, and there were a lot of soldiers with big weapons. We thought maybe they had come to tell us to go back to Burma so we were ready to run, and we didn't know if they were Burmese or Thai soldiers. We were afraid. There were all wearing striped uniforms. When I saw the cars I thought that we were all going to die. Maybe it was about midnight, I had my watch but I didn't look. We were shaking and I was together with my friends. My friends told me, "Don't say anything, we live in the Thai's country so the Thai will kill us."

Now we run every night. I don't know if they will come back, we are afraid and we go and sleep outside every night. We are afraid of Thais, Burmese, and DKBA; everybody. We are afraid and we have to run away and sleep outside. The Thai soldiers said, "Don't stay here. Gawlawas [white foreigners] won't look after you. Go back to Burma." We are afraid. The Thai soldier who talked to us was the one who stays at the checkpoint. He told us, "I told you to go back to Burma and you haven't gone. Why do you trust the Gawlawas? We are bigger than the Gawlawas. If we block the road then the Gawlawas's rice won't be able to come. If we send you, you must go back. You have a country. Why don't you go back? Why are you so happy to stay here?" We are not happy to stay here! We can't stay in Burma so we come and stay here. If we had our country why would we come and stay in their country? Why do they speak to us like that? "If we block the Gawlawas's rice you won't be able to receive it." The section leader explained what they said to us because we can't understand Thai language. I want to hate the Thais but I dare not. I'm afraid.

Q: Do you still dare to stay here?

A: I don't know, where the people decide to stay I will follow them. If the others go to another place I will follow, but I will never go back to Burma again. We were not happy in Burma, the Burmese made us suffer. My brothers and sisters live in Burma, but I'm afraid of the Burmese. The Burmese treated us badly and the DKBA also. When the Burmese hit

us, the DKBA just watched and they didn't do anything. I had to build the road, the Burmese soldiers said that the foreigners would come and inspect the road that the Burmese wanted to show them. They said that the foreigners would come and look at Ku Baw Chaung, Du Yaw Baw Chaung, T'Nay Hsah Baw Chaung, Paung Ye Bu, and Baw Chaung. So we had to build the road and we had no time to rest. Someone from every house had to go. If we didn't go we had to pay 200 *Kyat*. How could we give them 200 *Kyat* when we had no money? I had nothing, no money, but I had to buy rice, 500 or 600 *Kyat* for one basket. Now it is 1,500 *Kyat* for one basket! We had to build the road near the mountain, and it was very stony. We built the road from my village to Daw Lan and to Thaya Gone. The Burmese soldiers stay in Daw Lan and Thaya Gone. After that we had to build the road from T'Nay Hsah to Nabu. They said the foreigners will come and that the foreigners don't like it when the roads are not good. So the soldiers told us to work. We had to build the road in the afternoon but they didn't want us to have lunch. They hit us. They kicked me. If we took a rest they also shouted at us. If we went and protested to DKBA they just said we had to work with discipline. I couldn't work, I wanted to take a rest, I was very tired and I nearly died, so I came to the camp and I have stayed here for one year already. I arrived in this camp when it had all been burned and everything was lost [after the January 1997 burning]. Nobody gave me clothes, I stayed with my cousin, I was not registered in the camp. Slowly, I started to work and I asked my friends to give me some clothes.

Q: What do you think about the DKBA?

A: The DKBA don't remember anything. They looked like drunkards. They have taken medicine [drugs]. They looked like fools. When they take the medicine they don't know anything and we are afraid that they will kill us. We dare not go near them. We are afraid of the DKBA and of the Burmese. The Burmese are friendly to the DKBA, but what they will do one day to the DKBA we don't know.

Interview 11: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

1. Name:	"Saw Lah"	2. Name:	"Naw Wah"
Sex:	Male	Sex:	Female
Age:	52	Age:	43
Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen	Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen
Religion:	Christian	Religion:	Christian

Family: Married, 3 children aged 15, 17 and 20
 Address: Wangka village, Myawaddy township; now in Huay Kaloke
 Date of interviewed: March 16, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[*"Saw Lah" and "Naw Wah" are husband and wife. They stay in Section 1 of the camp, where they have lived for 14 years.*]

Q: Can you describe what happened?

"Saw Lah": We decided to flee because we were afraid. I was afraid of the bullets. When

the house was burning we ran. What else could we do? Everything was burning. We saw the soldiers setting fire to the houses. We were hiding and we didn't know where to run. We hid just a short time, not more than 15 minutes. We were staying under the house and when I saw the fire I ran away.

“Naw Wah”: We were under the house. If the house was not burning we would not have run. Someone had told us that if they came it wouldn't be to burn our houses, just to find people [important people like camp leaders].

Q: What happened when you fled?

“Saw Lah”: They came from Section 1. We saw them, they started to burn the houses, one after the other. When they came they passed in front of us, and when they were some distance away we started to run. [At that time he was hiding beside the streambed in Section 2.] The other people had run and only the three of us were left: myself, my wife, and the woman who sells chicken in her shop. All my children had already fled. When we ran to the road in Section 2, a soldier touched me with his gun. He asked me, “Are you Buddhist or Christian?” He spoke Sgaw Karen. If I had answered that I am a Christian he would have killed me, so I answered that I was Buddhist. He didn't say anything when I said that I was Buddhist, he just took my things and then he said, “We told you to go back to Burma so why didn't you go back? I will kill you.” When he pointed his gun at me he saw my watch and he took it. He also took my wife's watch and a ring with a stone. He took everything, my bag and one camera, but there was no money in my bag. In my bag there was a Bible, but he didn't see it because he just took the whole bag. I was afraid they would see the Bible, but they didn't do anything because the commander told them to be quick about it and they went away. He was also Sgaw Karen.

“Naw Wah”: The one who touched us with his gun spoke Sgaw Karen. Some others also spoke Sgaw Karen but they were drunk so they didn't know what they were doing. They asked for money. I said, “I have no money.”

“Saw Lah”: After the soldiers left us we went to the stream. When we ran to the stream the soldiers came and asked some women, “Are you Christian or Buddhist?” I know these women because they stay with my sister. The women said, “We are Christians.” When the women said that, a soldier threatened them with his gun so the women said, “Oh we lied to you, we are not Christian, we are Buddhist!” and then the soldier didn't do anything. He took the women's watches and he asked for their money. One woman said, “I have no money” so they checked her neck [to see if she had a necklace]. Then they went back to the other side of the stream. I heard all that because they were hiding near us.

“Naw Wah”: The soldiers told some of the women, “If you are Christian we will kill you.” Nobody dared to say that they were Christian.

Q: How many soldiers did you see?

“Saw Lah”: I saw eight soldiers. We saw the soldiers when we ran. They didn't seem normal but they did not smell of alcohol. One was holding a walkie-talkie, maybe he was a commander. The one with the walkie-talkie stood near us. The other soldiers were

standing behind him. They were wearing striped shirts and their trousers were also striped, the same as the Thai soldiers, with hats. Their hats also looked like Thai soldiers' hats. [He indicated a baseball-cap style hat.] The colour of the hats was dark green. I didn't see any scarves or any number on their uniforms, I dared not look. They wore striped uniforms and jungle boots. They came in three separate groups. One group was in the middle, another on the left, and a third group was behind a tree [a tree near the stream at the back of Section 1; probably their mortar support group]. They all came on a logging truck.

"Naw Wah": Some other people saw a car. But we ran because we were afraid.

Q: Did you see their weapons?

"Saw Lah": AK; he touched me with an AK for sure [AK 47]. I know because the AK is short. The other ones had M16, G3, and 79. The Burmese use that kind of gun, I know it. Not G 4 but G 3, AR, AK, and 79; the one that they shelled with was a 79 [M 79 grenade launcher; G3 is the standard Burmese Army assault rifle, not generally used by opposition forces. AK 47, M16 and AR are commonly used by opposition forces, occasionally also by the Burmese army].

Interview 12: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name:	"Naw Eh Say"
Sex:	Female
Age:	30
Ethnicity:	Pwo Karen
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married, 4 children aged 2-12
Address:	Du Yaw village, Pa'an District; now in Huay Kaloke
Date of interviewed:	March 16, 1998
Source:	KHRG

[*"Naw Eh Say" has lived in Huay Kaloke camp for 10 years. She now lives in Section 1.*]

Q: When did you start to run?

A: When I heard gunshots I started to run. Another house had already started to burn, and I saw that my house was burning. I don't know what time it was. I had no watch. We ran and hid in the ditch [a dry streambed] together with many friends. We heard shooting, ta-ta-ta-ta! so we dared not look. We stayed in the ditch, each on our own. Then the soldiers jumped down in the ditch, I don't know where they came from. One soldier touched all of us with his gun. We stayed quiet and he said, "Don't anybody run away." He spoke Sgaw Karen. He asked me, "Are you Christian or Buddhist?" I said "I'm Buddhist." Then he asked us, "Why don't you go back [to Burma]?" We said, "We have no money to go back." Then he touched me with his gun and he said, "We will find your bag." He asked me, "Did you put a gun in your bag?" We said, "No, we don't have any guns." We opened the bag, he looked in it and then he went away. I don't know which way they went, I dared not look.

Q: What did the soldiers look like?

A: I saw three soldiers. They were Sgaw Karen. They wore striped [camouflaged] uniforms. Their hats looked like soldiers' hats. Their hats were striped, with scarves tied around them. Not yellow, dark green scarves. I didn't see any badges on their uniforms. I dared not look, I was afraid that they would shoot me. I bowed to them. I bowed like we do to monks, I made them the Buddhist sign with my hands. I said that I was Buddhist. I pleaded with them, "Don't kill me." I was afraid.

Interview 13: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name: "Saw Ghay Htoo"
 Sex: Male
 Age: 30
 Ethnicity: Sgaw Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Single
 Address: Pa'an District; now in Huay Kaloke refugee camp
 Date of interviewed: March 16, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[*"Saw Ghay Htoo" has lived in Section 11 of Huay Kaloke camp since 1996. He has only one leg and wears a simple prosthesis on the other.*]

Q: Did anything happen before the night of the attack?

A: One night before, the Thai soldiers said, "You have to turn off the lights at nine o'clock." The second night [the night of the attack], they came at seven o'clock and told us to switch off the lights. They said, "Don't switch on the lights." Then some motorcycles came, they were not noisy. There were three persons on each motorcycle. Then they went back and disappeared, and after midnight they [the attackers] entered and fired their guns.

Q: Had the Thais ever come to this part of the camp at night before?

A: Yes, they came here before but they didn't come like that. If they came they usually had their lights on, but this time there were no lights.

Q: Then what happened?

A: I heard heavy weapons, they were shooting near here [Section 10 in the camp market]. They were firing heavy weapons from under a tree and they used the tree as cover sheets, 21/2-inch ones, landed here and over there. They fired them from Ah Na Mine Gone [in section seven near the main Thai gate]. I saw maybe six 21/2-inch shells. Three shells landed near me. Another 21/2-inch shell landed near my house and six persons got injured. Three landed in the pond. One landed near me and the explosion made me jump into the pond. Then I got out because I was very cold. Another shell from a big weapon landed first, and then I saw the soldiers. They also fired their guns, so people didn't know which way to run. A lot of people ran to the other side. I didn't run yet, I watched. The fire started in Section 1. The houses around mine burned, and then the fire spread to my house.

I stayed around here, beside the pond. After they had set fire to the houses, they came back and shot, shot, shot.... they came back in front of me and the soldier in the middle was holding a walkie-talkie. They spoke Sgaw Karen, Pwo Karen, and also Burmese, all mixed. I stayed like that. I wasn't afraid. As for me, if I die it is not a problem, I kept that in my mind. After I saw them something came into my mind - I wanted to shoot them. One soldier saw me and he was about to shoot me. I told him, "No, don't shoot me". He asked me, "Are you Thai or Sgaw Karen?" After he asked me that, he tried to shoot me, but his finger slipped from the trigger so he didn't shoot me. Then he said, "Oh, I didn't shoot you", and he went away. After many houses had already burned I started to run. I ran alone. I ran this way. When I ran there were no Burmese and no DKBA. I didn't see any soldiers then, everyone had disappeared.

Q: Did you see any Thais?

A: No. I saw 21 [DKBA/Burmese] soldiers, I counted them. I didn't see any other soldiers. I can't run well so I was sitting and watching, so I could count only the soldiers who passed in front of me. These 21 soldiers were wearing streaked [camouflage] jackets and streaked trousers, and some were wearing plain green ones. They were old uniforms, not new. There were more soldiers with streaked uniforms than without. Only four or five wore plain green uniforms. Not all of them had their hats on. Two or three had hats like the Burmese military hat. Some had red scarves [around their heads]. Their guns were AR and AK, and one was also carrying a walkie-talkie. That one was not wearing a striped uniform [camouflaged]. They were not normal. We knew that because they were not walking straight. The Burmese were wearing the plain green uniforms. I think I saw maybe two or three who looked like Burmese.

Q: Did you see any badges on their uniforms?

A: No, I didn't look at the badges, I only counted the soldiers. Maybe they wore the Bandoola badge [the Burmese army badge], but I didn't look. We also dared not look at their faces, we only counted them. I stayed squatting so they could only see my head. Maybe if they had seen my foot they would have shot me [they would have guessed that he was a former Karen soldier because of his prosthesis]. I told them, "Don't shoot", and they didn't shoot me.

Q: Did the soldiers ask your religion?

A: No, but they asked that of others. My friends ran to the other side [of the camp] and the soldiers told them, "If you are Christian we will kill you all." But my friends are Buddhists, so the soldiers didn't do anything to them.

Q: At the end, did the soldiers leave quickly or slowly?

A: They left quickly. They ran back. They left from Section 7, but maybe they separated into two groups and some left through Sections 5 and 6. After they left me, I didn't go to the Thai village. I went immediately to look for my friends, because maybe someone was wounded in the refugee camp. I didn't see any soldiers there because of the smoke from the fire. I couldn't see, and after that the soldiers went back. Before they went back they fired their big gun from under the tree, but the shells did not land here. There was automatic fire,

and also G3, G4, and AR. We didn't see exactly but when I heard the noise I knew which kind of gun it was ["Saw Ghay Htoo" used to be a soldier]. I saw one G4 [G3 and G4 are standard Burmese Army assault weapons not commonly used by opposition forces]. After they fired G3 and G4, 21/2-inch shells came again. Then when they finished firing their guns, the fire started to go out.

Interview 14: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name: "Saw Po Gyi"
 Sex: Male
 Age: 38
 Ethnicity: Pwo Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married, 4 children aged 10-16
 Address: Pa'an District; now in Huay Kaloke refugee camp
 Interviewed: March 16, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[*"Saw Po Gyi" has lived in Huay Kaloke camp since 1989. His house is in Section 11.*]

Q: What happened to you that night?

A: That night at 12:30, shells of heavy weapons were fired. DKBA and Burmese soldiers came and shot at the camp. I started running after they fired heavy weapons. Bullets from both big and small guns were flying around. The shells of the heavy weapons were coming from near the Thai checkpoint. The bullets from small guns were coming from here, and also from other places. I hid. We couldn't stay in the stream because there was water in it, but we stayed beside it. They met us there when they went back. There were about 10 of us by the stream. There were three men and the others were women and children. They didn't do anything to the women, but they told us, "Don't run, we will shoot you and kill you all." They asked, "Have you seen any Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA soldiers]?" One man said, "There is no Kaw Thoo Lei." They touched me with their guns. They were M1 [carbine] and M16. I dared not move. The soldier who touched me with his gun spoke Sgaw Karen. The soldier who spoke Pwo Karen told us, "Don't run, the shells of heavy weapons will hit you. You are not our enemy. Stay quiet, we will harm only our enemies." They grabbed two bags and some watches from the people. One was a student, she had two shirts, one skirt and 150 baht in her bag. Then they asked us, "Are you Buddhist or Christian?" We said, "We are Buddhists," and they said, "If you are Christian, we will kill all of you. Tomorrow you must go back to Myaing Gyi Ngu [DKBA headquarters in Pa'an District]. If you don't go back, in three days we will come back again." Then they went away and they started to fire their guns in the direction of the camp. They fired heavy weapons, and they fired 79s [M79 grenade launcher] twice. After they had fired and burned, the soldiers went away.

Q: How many soldiers did you see?

A: I saw 21 soldiers, but I didn't hear them speaking. They were the same that he saw [see

interview with “Saw Ghay Htoo”]. They wore streaked hats, but not all of them. Some hats were different, but the moon was shining so we dared not look in their faces. Some of the soldiers wore striped uniforms, and some of the soldiers looked like Burmese soldiers. There were more than 10 soldiers with streaked uniforms and four soldiers were wearing Burmese uniforms. These ones were carrying M16s but I didn’t see any sign on their uniforms. We dared not look to see if there were any badges on the DKBA uniforms because we don’t like them, they are our enemies. We don’t like the way they are working, they don’t work the right way. They were drunk. They looked like they had taken myin say [the drug commonly taken by DKBA, known as Ya Ba or Ya Ma in Thai, which makes one aggressive and stupid].

They left this way, the same way that they came. They crossed the fields. They threw away the old things [from what they had stolen] and they kept only the new ones. The people found those [old] things later. After they left we came back to our house and looked for all our things. My house did not burn, but we kept some of our things outside and they had burned in the fire. The soldiers put them into the fire and they burned.

Interview 15: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name:	Naw K’Paw Wah”
Sex:	Female
Age:	45
Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married, 5 children aged 2-16
Address:	Hlaing Bwe township, Pa’an District; now in Huay Kaloke refugee camp
Date of interviewed:	March 16, 1998
Source:	KHRG

["Naw K’Paw Wah” has been in Section 4 of Huay Kaloke camp for four years. Her house was right at the edge of the open field in the middle of the camp, and she was wounded in the attack.]

Q: When did you start running?

A: When we heard ta-ta-ta-ta! [she made the sound of automatic fire] we ran out of my house. I had no watch but I guess it was midnight. We carried our children and ran. Then we laid down beside our house. When we heard it the second time we ran beside the monastery and to the fields, not far from the banana garden. I stayed there for quite a long time, and after that I came back home again. When I came back I saw them [the soldiers] coming by. I was hidden behind the toilets when they came. They came along the main road [the camp’s main thoroughfare], then they went to the market. They marched quickly, chouay chouay chouay [she made the sound of rapid marching]. They were in a group, many soldiers, you couldn’t count. Maybe around 30 soldiers. They didn’t see me but I saw them clearly. They were very close. The distance between me and them was the length of a house. If I had looked carefully I could have seen the badges on their arms because of

the light of the fire, but I didn't look at them very carefully because of the fire. They carried guns. Some of them wore Burmese military uniforms and some of them wore streaked uniforms. Two of them wore white shirts. Some had caps and some had Burmese military hats. I heard them speak only in Karen, Sgaw Karen.

They were coming along and burning the houses along their way. The houses burned down quickly because the roofs were made of thatch. When I came back, Section 1 had already burned down completely, and Sections 3, 4, and 5 were burning. When the soldiers arrived, three of them entered my house. They didn't see me. If they had seen me I don't know what they would have said to me. I heard some people say that when the soldiers saw people they threatened to kill them. I hid myself. My children were already in the field, hiding behind the paddy-dikes.

My husband was together with me. He told me that our children are more precious than the possessions in our house, so he asked me to go to the children. So after the soldiers had passed by, I hurried and ran to the children, while he stayed here and watched. The soldiers passed through the field here [in the middle of the camp], but they couldn't see me because I was behind a paddy-dike. I didn't dare to go at first because there was a big fire. Afterwards, I escaped from the fire and ran to the monastery. A monk told me to run that way but I said, "I can't go that way, my children are over there [the other way]". When I kept on running on the high ground, they saw me and followed me, and the bullets landed nearer and nearer to me. Many bullets and shells flew over me. When I reached a tree I heard the sound of the guns so I laid down on my belly, near the banana trees and the teak tree at the edge of the camp. The bullets flew beside me, ta-ta-ta-ta! I laid there quietly. When the bullets stopped flying, I tried to lift up my body. As soon as I lifted up my buttocks, something hit them and knocked me back down again. I looked up in the tree to see the fruit but I saw that there was no fruit, so then I knew it was a shell that had hit me! The shell didn't penetrate my buttock, it disappeared after it hit me. I don't know where it flew. At that time there was fire everywhere. So I prayed, "Lord, please take care of me," because I thought that I would die. It was really painful and aching. I couldn't stand up. Then I called my son, "Hay Glaw! Hay Glaw!" He answered me, "Wai." I thought to myself that I wouldn't be able to go to my children, but I tried to go to my children. I could partly stand up, then I pulled my leg [she demonstrated trying to walk doubled over, gasping and limping]. I was bleeding. My children were in front of me, a little far from me, about 10 meters away, but when I reached the place where they were they were sitting down, looking at me sadly. I told them that I'd been wounded by a shell. Then I saw a man and I called him. "Wai, Doh Pu Sha!" ["Hallo, friend!"] He didn't answer anything to me, so I laid down for a while. I saw a monk. I called the monk and asked him to send me my husband. He agreed but he disappeared for a long time and I didn't see my husband coming. Then I saw a woman and called her. I asked her for some tobacco because I wanted to smoke and she gave me some. When I was smoking, everyone who walked by came to see me.

Some people told the Thai soldiers about me and the Thai soldiers came to me. At that time my husband was arriving. The Thai soldiers asked my husband to carry me. He was going to take me to the monastery but I said that there's no hospital in the camp, so I'd rather go where the Thai soldiers asked me to go. Then they sent me to the water truck [the Thai fire truck]. I waited for a long time. There was no hospital car coming. The water

truck started to leave, then the hospital car arrived and my husband put me in the hospital car. Inside that car the wind was blowing. I looked for the window that was open but the windows were closed. I couldn't understand how the wind could blow through the glass of the car, but the wind blew a lot and made me very cold [she had never experienced air conditioning before]. My husband thought that I was unconscious and he called me, "Naw, Naw" and I answered him, "It is cold." When I reached the hospital the nurse put some medicine on my wound and put me in a bed. I covered myself with a sarong, I was shivering with cold. The nurses came and looked at me, then they put me in another bed with blankets. Then I was warmed up and I slept all night until the morning.

Q: What did the shell that hit you look like?

A: I don't know because I couldn't see because of the dark night. I just guess. A small shell I think. A kind of shell that has yellow colour on the top and black on the bottom. It was a little bit bigger than a banana. It hit my buttock right here [she was very lucky, because it appears that she was hit by an M79 grenade that didn't explode].

Interview 16: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name:	"Saw Klaw Wah"
Sex:	Male
Age:	47
Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married, 4 children aged 4-14
Address:	Pa'an Township; now in Huay Kaloke refugee camp
Date of interviewed:	March 17, 1998
Source:	KHRG

Q: When did you start to run?

A: I don't know. I slept for a few hours and suddenly woke up when I heard weapons firing, and I ran away. I carried my youngest son. I didn't know what time it was. I wanted to save my things, but the Thai soldiers wanted us to sit down in the fields. They didn't allow us to go back. I decided to go back and went to ask whether we could go or not, but I didn't get to ask anything because one Thai soldier kicked me, while one of his friends sat and looked at me. Most of the people saw me when I was kicked. He kicked me two times, once in the chest and once in the waist. I didn't fall down but I nearly did. I couldn't breathe very well after I was kicked. When the Thai soldier kicked me the first time I passed urine, and then when I turned around he beat me with his gun. That happened at 3 a.m. He told me to go back and sit with my friends. Some of my friends were kicked as well. Then the Thai soldiers called each other and went back. The left side of my back swelled up. It was very painful on both sides when I coughed. I went to the clinic to get medicine. There are no visible wounds but I'm still on medicine and it is still painful inside my body. I feel better when I take medicine.

Q: Did the Thai soldiers beat anybody else ?

A: First they only beat me, and then they beat some other people. They beat Maung N—and A-'s mother. They also beat some women. In the morning people said that some had been kicked and slapped by the Thai soldiers.

Q: How long did you stay in the fields?

A: We stayed about 20 minutes and then the Aw Saw [Thai volunteer militia] came, so we asked them permission to go back to save our things and they let us go back. But most people stayed there and didn't ask permission.

Q: Do you want to stay here or go to Beh Klaw? Where do you want to go?

A: It depends on the [camp] leaders. I'll go and stay anywhere that it's possible to live, but I'm afraid to go to Beh Klaw.

Interview 17: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name:	"Saw Eh Doh Htoo"
Sex:	Male
Age:	30
Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married, 5 children aged 1-13
Address:	Nyaunglebin District; now in Huay Kaloke refugee camp
Date of interviewed:	March 18, 1998
Source:	KHRG

[*"Saw Eh Doh Htoo" has been in Huay Kaloke camp for 14 years. He stays in Section 1.*]

Q: Can you tell me what happened that night?

A: I can tell you. That night at 11:46 p.m., I saw one car and six motorcycles coming. The car was a small jeep. It was an old car. I didn't see the car's number because it was night time and they didn't have their lights on. I think I saw six soldiers in the car and two on each motorcycle, six motorcycles. All wore streaked [camouflaged] uniforms and they had weapons, but I didn't see what weapons. They came from Section 10, from the market. When they arrived they didn't turn their lights on. They made a lot of noise and when they came back they also made a big noise. When they arrived at Section 1 they stopped for about five minutes near the stream, then they went further than our house so I didn't see them. Then I saw them coming back. We didn't see them getting out in Section 1, but maybe they got out at another spot, we don't know. They still had their lights off. After they'd been gone for about 30 or 45 minutes, the shooting started.

Q: What do you think was the nationality of the men on the motorcycles?

A: I could not distinguish them. Usually every time the Thai soldiers come they turn their lights on, and the Thai soldiers here know me, if they see me they call me. This time, they saw me but they didn't call me.

Q: Did you see other soldiers after the beginning of the shootings?

A: I saw more than 60 soldiers in Section 1. They were together. They were Burmese soldiers, they wore streaked uniforms. Some wore hats like this [he indicated a beret], some wore baseball caps and some wore Burmese military hats. I didn't see any insignia on their uniforms because it was too dark and I dared not go near them. They spoke in Burmese and Karen languages. They called, "Set fire to the houses and shoot!" in Pwo Karen and they called "Run, run!" in Burmese. I was on the road and they shot at me when they met me. They also shot at the youth chairman named Hla Kyi. He was wounded but I wasn't, and I ran to my house. They were shooting with AK, AR, G3, M 79, and [carbine] rifles.

Q: What would you say if the Thais tell you to go to Burma or to Beh Klaw?

A: I dare not go back to Burma. I will say no, and I won't go to Beh Klaw. We need and want to stay in a new place where our lives will be safe and where we will also have good security.

Interview 18: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name:	"Pu K'Mwee Htoo"
Sex:	Male
Age:	58
Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married, 7 children aged 6-40
Address:	Pa'an Township; now in Huay Kaloke refugee camp
Date of interviewed:	March 18, 1998
Source:	KHRG

[*"Pu K'Mwee Htoo" lives in Section 4 of Huay Kaloke camp.*]

Q: That night what happened when you saw that car?

A: I was not sleeping, I didn't go to bed early, I didn't sleep and I was listening. So when the car came I was not sleeping. We were afraid and we were listening. When the car came it was just a little bit noisy and they had their lights turned off. The car was an old jeep without doors driven by soldiers. I saw four motorcycles behind the car. They came from this way [from the market and the main entrance] and many people saw that. They stopped the car and we thought that they were going to visit the other houses. Four soldiers got out of the car. I didn't hear them [talking] and I don't know what they were wearing, maybe black or camouflage, because it was a little bit far from the house. Then the car went back and there were no soldiers in the car. I think there was only the driver left when I saw the car. If there had been other soldiers in the car we would have seen them, because there were no doors. That car comes to the camp all the time. It is black. We thought that they were just coming through like they often do. But they didn't go further [than the school], they went back. I think that they came and drove people in. There were three on each motorcycle, and when they went back there were two on each motorcycle.

Q: What did you do after that?

A: I didn't do anything, I went to take a rest. About 20 minutes after the car had gone back, the explosions started. I heard the explosions and I ran to the toilets [the school toilets, which are made of concrete]. They saw me and they fired their guns near the toilets. They shot at me with small guns. Later we picked up the shell cases and they were AK47 bullets. I stayed in the toilets until the fire went out. I didn't see them because I dared not go out. I dared not lift my head up to look outside. They shot non-stop. The shell of a big weapon landed near me so I dared not lift up my head. But I heard them going and swearing in Burmese when they came and shot up the school library. I came out of the toilets when all the soldiers were gone.

Interview 19: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name:	"Saw Hsah Hay Mu"
Sex:	Male
AGE:	33
Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married, 2 children aged 2 and 4
Address:	Pa'an Township; now in Section 1 of Huay Kaloke refugee camp
Date of interviewed:	March 18, 1998
Source:	KHRG

[*"Saw Hsah Hay Mu" is a medic in Huay Kaloke camp, where he has lived since 1984.*]

Q: Can you explain what happened that night?

A: That night we were on duty. During the night we spoke together about rabies and also about the patients. We discussed a patient who had cerebral malaria. Then we talked more about malaria, because some teachers were coming to teach us how to see virus in a microscope. We had to practice looking through the microscope to know how to identify the parasite. We went to sleep at 10 p.m. and we slept for one or two hours. Maybe at about midnight we heard a car coming into the camp. It stopped near the hospital and then went further than the hospital, to the corner of Section 1 near the fields. Somebody saw two motorcycles in front of the car and two behind, but I didn't see the car or the motorcycles, I just heard the noise. When the car would have been nearly back to the gate, it [the attack] happened.

It started with small guns, then just after that big shells landed near the hospital. After I heard the guns I began to run outside with my family. Before I got outside my wife opened the door, and she got injured in front of our house. She was hit by a bullet and she started bleeding. At the beginning she was bleeding a lot, but then the bleeding decreased bit by bit so I told her, "Let's get away, you can't stay here for long. We have to run away." After that DKBA and SLORC came almost to where we were. They spoke mostly Karen. Some spoke Burmese but the others said to them, "Don't speak Burmese, you have to speak Karen. What did the leader tell you before coming here? You have to speak Karen." So after that they spoke only in Karen.

Q: So you saw the soldiers?

A: Yes, I saw the soldiers in the fields. We were sitting together in the fields and they came around us. A lot of people were in the fields, maybe 100. The other villagers came from Section 2, Section 3, and also from Section 4. About fifteen or sixteen soldiers surrounded us. They looked at us carefully and then they said, "We will kill you all if you don't go back to Burma." After they had told us that, they went away. In front of us they continued to burn the houses. We went further into the fields. We couldn't stand near where they were burning the houses because it was too hot, very hot for our families. So we had to run away. We stayed in the fields the whole night until morning.

Q: Did you see what they were wearing?

A: Yes, I saw their uniforms very well. They were like Thai soldiers' uniforms [he showed a jacket with camouflage pattern as an example]. There were also some plain green uniforms. I saw badges on their uniforms, we call it the Bandoola badge [the standard red-and-white Burmese Army badge]. But I couldn't see their [battalion] numbers, because when they saw me they said to me, "I will kill you." They wore baseball-style caps and some wore Burmese military hats. Just some of them had caps. A lot had black hats this shape [like a Burmese army hat], and some had round black hats this shape [a beret]. Some had a yellow scarf around their necks. The others didn't have yellow scarves because they were not DKBA. I could recognize that. I'm sure that they were Burmese soldiers. The Burmese were wearing Burmese military hats.

Q: Is your wife better now?

A: My wife is cured but I could not find the bullet so it is still painful. I couldn't see the bullet. It is still inside, but I didn't send my wife to Mae Sot hospital. I can cure her, but maybe later it will be necessary to remove it. I can remove it if the wound disappears.

Q: What do you think they are going to do now with the camp?

A: If they move the camp it would be better for us, because if we stay here I think that the same thing will happen again. If we continue to stay here the camp will be burned again. But if we have to move to Beh Klaw, I won't go. In Beh Klaw the security is not good either.

Interview 20: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name:	"Naw Eh Moo"
Sex:	Female
Age:	24
Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen
Religion:	Christian
Occupation:	Teacher
Family:	Married, 3 children
Address:	Huay Kaloke refugee camp
Date of interviewed:	March 19, 1998

[The following notes on the situation in Huay Kaloke were written in English a week after the attack on the camp, by a human rights monitor who has lived there for over 10 years. The English has been slightly edited.]

The SPDC army acted very wildly toward the sleeping children in the refugee camp. On the night of March 10, 1998 at 11 p.m. the Thai soldiers allowed the SPDC army to enter our Huay Kaloke refugee camp to kill us and burn us together with our possessions. At midnight the SPDC started to shell us with heavy weapons, M79 grenades and 21/2 inch mortars. The first shell hurt a teacher and a boy. Then they fired grenades and mortars nonstop. So many children were hurt by the shells. They had bad injuries. A pregnant woman was shot and then burned to death in Section 2 behind camp leader Mary On's house. Her daughter was hurt as well, by a shell fragment in her hip. Her daughter is only nine years old.

There were four members of a family who were terribly burned, and the youngest daughter died three days later. They were in Section 4 [this family tried to avoid the shelling by hiding down a shallow cement well and pulling the lid overtop them, but they were all badly burned by the heat of the houses burning all around them]. Another sleeping family was also injured [by shell fragments], the mother was hit in her left breast. Her nine year old daughter was hit in the left side of her head. Her seven year old son was hit in his right shoulder and his left hand.

As for me, I have three children. My eldest son is six, my second son is five and my youngest son is two. At midnight when I heard the sound of the mortars and saw the light [of the fire], I carried my youngest boy and pulled along my eldest. My mother carried my second son. I had no idea where to run to, so I went under our house. My brother told us to run to the fields, but I didn't dare go because so many shells were falling in the field. Then I saw my friend, Teacher T—, and his parents pass by my house so I followed them. At that time my brother was in our house trying to gather our clothing, food and blankets. He was hurrying to follow us, but luckily while he was grabbing the bottle of my children's milk powder in his frightened hands, he dropped the bottle. Just as he bent to pick up the bottle a 21/2-inch shell exploded behind my house. That shell wounded six people behind my house. I was about five minutes away from my house by then. My brother wasn't too close to the shell, but he fell on his back. He felt numbness in his body, and he also felt hot all over. He thought he'd been hurt by a piece of the shell, but when he checked his body there were no injuries. When he heard the cries of the injured people he jumped down from the house and looked for them so he could carry them.

As for me and two of my children, we ran straight to the Thai village and stayed in the yard of the Thai monastery until dawn. When I arrived at the Thai village it was a quarter past midnight. I looked back at my refugee camp and saw many shells exploding over it. At 1 a.m. on March 11, my camp was burned down. So many houses were burned. At 1:15 a.m. I still hadn't seen my mother and my second son, so I was very sad. About 50 shells were exploding in our camp. My mother ran to the Karen monastery in our camp and then joined me in the Thai village by a different way. At 2 a.m. I met my mother, my second son and my brother.

Then I found out that there was one pregnant woman who was shot and wounded, she fell beside her house and was then burned to death with her house. Her name was Ma

Pein. A seven year old boy named Pa Lah Ghay was shot in his head and died in an NGO car on the way to the hospital. A 15 year old girl was burned and died later on March 14. There were also 36 people who were injured.

On March 11 between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. the Thai soldiers beat six people in the field near the camp. The Thai soldiers didn't say anything to them, just beat them and told them to sit in the field.

Now we have to be afraid of the SPDC army and the Thai army as well. The Thai soldiers are not kind to us, because the Thai Government wants to drive us back to forced labour, portering and hunger in Burma. I believe we need a safer place for refugees. We need a place between Mae Ramat and Tak, near Thai Karen villages [in the hills east of Huay Kaloke further inside Thailand; these hills are fairly sparsely populated by small Karen villages]. It is plenty of land filled with water and bamboo. Then we need UN troops to provide security for us because we cannot trust the Thais. I have many Thai soldier friends, and they've told me that they really won't protect us. They don't want to kill the SPDC soliders. They are not brave in battle, they are only cruel to the refugees. I have been in Thailand 14 years, and I know the Thai spirit very well. They only love money. If we can pay them money then they pretend to care for us, but when they finish spending the money they no longer pretend to care. Their faces and mouths show their hearts.

Interview 21: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name:	"Saw Tha Muh"
Sex:	Male
Age:	20+
Ethnicity:	Pwo Karen
Family:	Single
Address:	Dooplaya District; now in Section 6 of Maw Ker refugee camp
Date of interviewed:	March 23, 1998
Source:	KHRG

[*"Saw Tha Muh" was wounded during the attack.*]

Q: Are there any pieces of the shell left in your thigh?

A: I don't know. I don't know if I was wounded by big weapons or by guns. I was the sentry at the gate, I was sleeping and I ran very quickly.

Q: Did you see the soldiers?

A: Yes, I saw all of them. About 20 or 30 came. I saw Burmese soldiers and DKBA, I saw all of them. I don't know what they were wearing, it looked like Burmese soldiers' uniforms. I dared not look anymore, I ran. They didn't come by car, they just came. In the evening we saw people with lights going along the other road [not the road near the gate]. That night we had to be careful because the situation was not good. And after one or two hours I told the other people in [refugee] security that I would sleep for a while and I slept on the ground.

Q: Did they fire big weapons?

A: I don't know if it was the Burmese or the Thais firing big weapons. A lot of Thai soldiers came and many people were mixed together. We saw the Burmese and the DKBA coming from behind the monastery, they called "Dteh! Dteh! Dteh!!" ["Go on! Go on! Go on!!" in Burmese]. After they went back, Thai soldiers came to the camp and put out the fire but they didn't fire any guns, they only came and looked around. Many houses burned in Section 6 and I can't tell how many people were injured there.

Q: Did you hear them [the attackers] say that they will come again?

A: No, I didn't hear them say that.

Q: Did you come here [to hospital] with any friends?

A: Yes, that boy there stays in the camp. He got injured like me. He didn't see the soldiers, he was sleeping with his wife in his house. There is also this woman who is laying down there, but I don't know her name. The other patients are in the [Thai] hospital.

Interview 22: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing, Religion

Name:	"Daw Sein"
Sex:	Female
Age:	25
Ethnicity	Pwo Karen
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married, 1 child
Address:	Doolaya District; now in Maw Ker refugee camp
Date of interviewed:	March 23, 1998
Source:	KHRG

[*"Daw Sein" was wounded in the attack and was interviewed in hospital.*]

Q: When and how were you wounded?

A: I was not sleeping when I heard the heavy weapons, I was breastfeeding my child. I went down to the ground and my husband told me, "Don't run, they are firing big weapons and a lot of shells are landing". I dared not stay so I took my child and I ran outside the house. My sarong was falling down so I told my husband, "Carry the baby." He held it, I tied my sarong and then I told my husband, "Give me back the baby." My husband didn't give it to me because he didn't want me to run. A lot of bullets landed in front of me. I covered myself like this [with her hands] and when they started firing I was wounded in my hand. I was wounded by small guns, not by the big ones. If they'd only fired one bullet I wouldn't have been wounded, but many bullets were flying, it sounded like ta-ta-ta-ta-ta! They also fired a lot of big shells in Section 6.

Q: Did many people get injured?

A: In Section 6 I'm the only one who got seriously injured. My finger bone was broken to pieces so they had to cut off my finger. Another was a sentry, he was wounded in his back

and in his leg. Another one was wounded in the head. Both are from Section 6 but I don't know their names. In Section 6, five people were wounded. One woman had a shell land on her house and she was injured in the elbow and on her buttock. She didn't come to the hospital. The Gawlaw [‘white foreigners’, i.e. Medicine San Frontier doctors] came and took us to the hospital, me and one man. He is 22 years old but I don't know his name. He stayed in Section 6. The others didn't get serious injuries, just minor injuries, so they sent them to Maw Ker hospital. There is a clinic and a nurse there.

Q: Have you heard about the Muslims who got injured?

A: The Muslim woman here, her husband and her baby were both wounded. I don't know where she was wounded, but her baby's legs are broken [the mother's name is Nha Ma Chan, age 25; her baby boy was seven days old, named Tha Tha]. Now they are also staying in the hospital. I dare not look. One pregnant Muslim woman from Maw Ker was also wounded, but I don't know where. She doesn't live in Section 6 because in Section 6 there are no Muslims, so maybe she stays in Section 7 or 8.

Q: Did you see the soldiers?

A: Yes I saw them. They spoke Pwo Karen, Sgaw Karen and Burmese. The Burmese [soldiers] were behind the Karen soldiers. The DKBA burned the houses and they called out, “Burn, burn!” They spoke in Pwo Karen. I could hear because I stayed inside the bunker when they started to burn the houses. I was already wounded. They shouted, “Burn, burn!” The Burmese were behind them they stayed behind the monastery, and the DKBA didn't burn the monastery. We had two monasteries; Than Manee monastery was Burmese and Wah Lay monastery is Pwo Karen. The Burmese monastery was completely burnt down, and so was the hall [beside it], but Wah Lay monastery was not burned. The Burmese fired their guns until the DKBA called to them in Burmese language, “Don't fire, don't fire!” And then the Burmese didn't fire. When they fired it was only villagers who got injured. They sat in front of our house and they fired, so how could we run?

Q: Do you know how many soldiers came?

A: Maybe 40 or 50 soldiers came. I had to carry my baby and my fingers were wounded, so I didn't have time to look. I don't know how they came; they didn't come by car. They fired big weapons, two or three shells, and then they fired their guns. They shot a lot of bullets, and then they burned the houses. In our section over 40 houses were burned. My house was burned. My house was near the monastery. In Section 6, 44 houses were burned. No houses burned in Section 4, but some did in Sections 7 and 8. I don't know exactly because when I got injured someone brought me to the hospital and the section leader didn't come to tell us.

Interview 23: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name:	“Saw Say Po”
Sex:	Male
Age:	30+
Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen

Family: Married, children
 Address: Dooplaya District; now in Section 1 of Maw Ker refugee camp
 Date of interviewed: March 23, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[“Saw Say Po”’s daughter was wounded in the attack.]

Q: When was your daughter wounded?

A: My daughter was wounded last night, at about midnight or one o’clock. Her name is Moo Rah Paw. She is two years and two months old. She got injured in her lower jaw by a big shell.

Q: I thought that in Section 1 there were no casualties?

A: Yes, there were casualties in Section 1 and also in Section 3. In Section 1 my daughter and two others who got just a few fragments. The other two are in the beds over there. One is injured on her hip and the other in her leg. The one who got injured in the leg is Than Than Yi, she is 28 years old the pieces entered her thigh. The other is Say Lway Paw, she is 26. The baby there is only seven days old, he got injured and his father, his mother and his whole family got injured. Now there is no one to take care of him so I help him. His mother is in a very bad condition, the shell fragments penetrated her lungs, all over her back and in her buttocks.

Q: Did the houses burn in Section 1?

A: In Section 1 the houses didn’t burn. They [soldiers] entered Section 6, and only in Sections 6 and 7 the houses burned. I don’t know how many houses burned. When I left, the fire trucks were going into the camp. I saw many fire trucks from a distance.

Q: Do you think the attackers were Burmese, DKBA or Karen Peace Army?

A: I don’t know, but I heard that there was one who joined the Burmese Army, his name is Maung Chit Thu. Burmese. I don’t know if he is DKBA or KPA, we only heard that he joined the Burmese. [Maung Chit Thu is a DKBA commander from further north in Pa’an District, who was reportedly brought in for the attack by the SPDC because the local DKBA did not want to attack the camp.] I didn’t see the soldiers, but some people in Section 6 said they saw them. They said that they were young, just children.

Interview 24: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name: “Saw Bway”
 Sex: Male
 Age: 25
 Ethnicity: Sgaw Karen
 Family: Married, children
 Address: Dooplaya District; now in Section 6 of Maw Ker refugee camp
 Date of interviewed: March 23, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[“Saw Bway”’s house was near the Burmese monastery and was burned in the attack.]

On the 23rd at midnight or one o’clock, SPDC and DKBA came to the camp, they fired big weapons and small guns and they burned houses. They burned Section 6 and part of Section 7. They burned more than 40 houses. Forty families were homeless. I saw some of them [the soldiers] wearing civilian clothes. When we ran we couldn’t carry our things because they fired their weapons. If they hadn’t fired we could have saved our things.

Q: Did they shoot at the monastery or did they set it on fire?

A: They shot, paung-paung-paung [imitating the noise of mortar shells]. I ran to the bunker and I called my family and my children to hide in the bunker.

Q: Do you think that the DKBA would shoot the monastery deliberately?

A: I can’t tell. If they were DKBA they should have had yellow scarves, but we didn’t see any scarves on their heads. We could see their faces because of the fire. Maybe they put their scarves in their bags, we don’t know. But the soldiers were shouting at each other, because I heard one saying in Karen, “Don’t shoot, don’t shoot, why are you firing your guns, it is very strange that you are firing your guns!” Only a few soldiers came. If many came they’d have no security and they’d suffer more casualties [because the Thai soldiers would know they were coming].

[Another refugee from Section 6, who was on duty as a sentry that night, added:] That night at ten, we saw some strangers and we didn’t know exactly who they were. Some people said that they were hunters. Later I saw four soldiers going to Section 7 and four to Section 3. I also saw some soldiers staying behind the monastery [they never entered further into the camp]. One sentry who was staying under a tree got wounded. After the attack we saw a 21/2-inch [mortar] shell and RPG shells left on the ground, but when the Thai soldiers came they took them away. I think that those soldiers didn’t dare to come and attack again because they were drunk and looked like they were afraid. They burned the [Burmese] monastery and a hall [just in front of the monastery]. They came one way and they went back the same way.

Interview 25: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing, Religion

Name:	“Saw Eh Kler”
Sex:	Male
Age:	23
Ethnicity:	Karen
Occupation:	Student
Family:	Single, 3 brothers and sisters
Address:	Dooplaya District; now in Section 1 of Maw Ker refugee camp for 5 or 6 years
Date of interviewed:	March 23, 1998
Source:	KHRG

[*“Saw Eh Kler” is the youngest of four siblings and just finished high school in the refugee camp. His father is dead and his mother lives elsewhere.*]

Q: Can you tell me what happened that night and when it happened?

A: I am from Section 1, but that night I went to visit my friend in Section 3. He said, “Don’t go back, it is too dark, sleep here.” So I slept there. I was already asleep when I first heard the explosion. I looked at my watch and it was 1:15 a.m. When I heard the explosion I jumped down out of the house. I hid under the house, and then I walked to Section 1. They started to fire heavy weapons, after that they fired rifle grenades [special grenades that are mounted on the end of a rifle like an M1 carbine], small mortars and other bullets. Then the shooting stopped and I walked to Section 6. I reached Section 6 when the houses were burning. One man told me, “Nephew, they left already, they came just for a while.” I asked him, “Did you see many soldiers?” He answered, “I don’t know, the soldiers came in two groups. One group of soldiers came to see me and the other group went along the road.” The soldiers spoke Karen. They asked him, “Where are the Muslims’ houses?” and he said, “They are very far from here.” That group of soldiers was followed by the Burmese. The Burmese were behind them, while it was mostly the DKBA going in front.

The man said that when they entered they started firing the big weapons, one group called “Go on, go on, go on” in Karen, and the other group called “Go on, go on, go on” in Burmese. One group asked for a lighter from the others. The other group said, “Don’t burn, don’t burn”, but the first group said, “Burn, burn!” Then one soldier asked his friend for a lighter and his friend said, “I have no lighter.” So he asked one from another friend, and he set fire to the houses. That was about 15 minutes after they’d started shooting.

The first group was running in front and the second group was running and setting fire [to the houses] at the same time. Another group was staying behind the monastery they were Burmese. Each of the first two groups had four people. They burned the houses, they moved back and then they left the camp. That man told me, “I really saw it. They came and they burned my house. I put out the fire and they set it on fire again, and I put it out again. Then they searched me and they asked, ‘Uncle, do you have any money?’ I told them I have no money and they said, ‘If you don’t have money then run, run!’” They burned his house after he had run away. When I saw him he was sitting near the fire.

Later a lot of Thai military cars came. The Thai soldiers came and talked to a man from Section 7 who was near me, his name is M—. They asked him, “Which way did they come from?” M— answered, “They came from that way.” The [Karen] sentries had seen and heard them and they had shouted. The Thai soldiers didn’t say anything, and they were worried that the people would think that they did not provide any security. While that was happening, the Thai soldiers went in a line near the grave and shelled four times with big weapons. Then later the Thai soldiers who were in a line near the road shelled again. They fired across the river at Wah Lay. That was before sunrise. They fired again and again until five in the morning, and the people in the camp ran away because they were worried that the SPDC and the DKBA would shoot back.

Q: Did the Thai soldiers do sentry duty to protect people before that night?

A: No, they didn’t do anything. Sometimes they provide security but not regularly. That night we had only villagers as sentries and they were carrying nothing but slingshots, so

they dared not shoot. By looking at their behavior, I think the Thai, the Burmese and the DKBA have joined hands and are working together.

Q: Yesterday when the Thai authorities came and called a meeting, what did they say?

A: I think that they wanted to know the population of the camp, how many Christians, Muslims and Buddhists are in the population and how many people can speak Thai. And they asked about the helicopter crash. The Thai official asked, "Did you ever see that helicopter?" The villagers answered, "Yes, we saw it." And they asked, "Did you see the place where it crashed?" We answered, "We didn't see it." Then they showed money, 15,000 Baht, and they said, "If you find the pieces of the helicopter, we will give you this money." That was a Thai helicopter that crashed in the rainy season of 1997. We didn't see it crash, but we saw it flying that day. I didn't hear it crash but I heard the SPDC shooting at it. [A Thai army helicopter patrolling the border crashed in rainy season 1997, probably shot down by SLORC troops. SLORC refused the Thai request to send a team to search for the wreckage until several weeks later, and then would only allow them to search one specific location. No wreckage was found.]

Q: If someone tells you that you have to go back to Burma, what will you do?

A: Why would I go back? If we go to stay in Burma we must be slaves of the Burmese. I would rather go and be a KNLA soldier and shoot at them. That would be better for me.

Interview 26: Forced labor, Killing, Torture, Refugee, Relocation

Name:	"Pa Bway Htoo"
Sex:	Male
Age:	44
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Dta La Ku, Sect group
Occupation:	Farmer
Marital Status:	Married with seven children
Address:	Doolaya district, Karen State
Date of interview:	March 23, 1998
Source:	KHRG

["Pa Bway Htoo" is a Dta La Ku village elder who often has to negotiate with all sides in the conflict.]

I will explain to you the things that have happened in the past, about KNU and SLORC over time through the years. These things give problems to the villagers. The villagers have to suffer between KNU and SLORC, many kinds of difficult things. Sometimes SLORC or KNU groups do what their leaders order them to do, but sometimes they do not do as their leaders order, so the people who live near the border have had to suffer difficulties many times. As for me, I live along the border so I have to see and hear these problems. It makes me sad and I have pity on the people who have to suffer these problems. I want to tell about what happened first, when the SLORC came. At that time,

we were near the border and many people from many villages, such as Kwih Kler, Meh Naw Dah Hta, Lay Th'Ray, Tee Po Khaw, Maw, Tee Ler Baw, Kay Ghaw, Heh Kyaw Kwa and Meh Ger, ran away to escape from the dangerous bullets and shells exchanged between KNU and SLORC. The villagers were afraid and ran away because they could not stand it. Some people arrived in Noh Po [refugee camp] but the people who were very close to the border did not go, because they wanted to make peace, to live in their own villages to farm and to earn their living in their own land. When there will be peace in their country, at that time we will go to visit them.

I am the village headman from xxxx and I have a lot of pity for the people when I see that they have to suffer these problems. So I went to visit the second in command of LIB 44 [Light Infantry Division; actually just the second in command of the 44 Division troops in that area] named Aung Kyaw Nyunt; the name of their colonel is Than Lwin. They welcomed us nicely and told me, "Tell the people who fled to Thailand to come back and till their fields in their own villages." Then I went to Kwih Lat Der and held a meeting there with the headmen and the people, and told them what I had been told. The people who heard that were satisfied and happy, so they went back to their own villages. The people who'd fled on foot went back on foot, and the people who had fled on bullock carts went back with their bullock carts and their cattle. The people who had some possessions hired cars and went back with warm hearts and lived in their villages happily.

The time passed by and No. 44 went back, then No. 22 [Light Infantry Division] and LIB 356 came instead. Their leaders forced the people to work for them. The labor was not so hard, but the worst thing was that they arrested people and forced them to produce for weapons after they had tied them up. Then they interrogated the frightened people. Some people were not what the soldiers accused them of, but they were very afraid and the soldiers forced them to confess anyway, and then they had big problems until they couldn't stand it any more. The soldiers persecuted them in many ways, and they forced people to give their livestock, to sell them their cattle and buffaloes and to pay taxes to them. The people had to pay the taxes but they didn't really know to whom they should give them. If they gave them to one man, another man arrested them.

So, we were living near the border and we were sad to hear about these things. When the LIB 356 came, they persecuted the people and many people were hurt. The name of the LIB 356 commander was Ohn Lwin and the commanders who raped and persecuted many people were Htoo Kya and A'Saw Myo Htet. First Htoo Kya was living in Kwih Lat Der and Yaw K'Daw, then he went to live in Lay Th'Ray and persecuted a lot of people. Once he met a man who was a fool [mentally handicapped] and he asked the man, "Do you have a weapon? Have you seen the place where the KNU hides their weapons?" Then the fool answered, "Yes, I saw." Htoo Kya asked, "Where was it?", and the man answered, "Up on the rock" [it was a small limestone cliff]. After a while he saw a farmer coming back from his fields and he told commander Htoo Kya, "I can't climb up that rock, but that man can climb up the rock because he was the one who put the weapons up there, so he knows better than I do." Then Htoo Kya captured the farmer and forced him to seek the weapons up on the rock. But he couldn't find anything, so Htoo Kya kicked him off the rock and he fell. His name was Saw Chit Heh. They killed him; he was from Lay Th'Ray village.

Another man named Saw Ku climbed up a dogfruit tree to get some dogfruit.

Unfortunately he fell and broke his leg. He went to a traditional healer named Maung Yo Yeh. Maung Yo Yeh cured the broken leg with holy oil over which mantras had been recited. The Burmese heard about it, and they said “This nga pway [‘ringworm’, i.e. KNLA] soldier came back from the frontline battle and that traditional healer cured him.” I testified that what they said was not true, because there was no battle wound on Saw Ku’s leg. It really was broken by falling from the tree. Then they threatened the village headman that they would kill him because he had allowed a nga pway soldier to be cured. They said if the headman didn’t want to die he must give them 50,000 *kyat*. The headman was afraid of them but he couldn’t do anything. He asked them to go and see the place where Saw Ku had fallen down but they wouldn’t go. He asked them to go and look at Saw Ku’s leg but they wouldn’t go. They just asked for money. So the villagers helped him by collecting 50,000 *kyat*, and they gave that money to Htoo Kya. When the Burmese got 50,000 *kyat* they went away and stopped making problems for him.

So, the civil servants are working at politics. The Burmese say that they must rule over people in their country and that what they are doing is for the people in their country. The Thais also say the same, and if we look carefully we see that they rule over their people and persecute them terribly also. So we who live on the border are very sad to see the people on both sides suffering terrible things.

Afterwards IB 61 came, and they forced the people to work very hard but the people tried to do it anyway. They forced the people to carry cement from Ber Kler to Htee Hta Baw [over 20 km/12 miles as the crow flies, much farther on land], at night time in the rainy season when the river was flooded. So the people were in trouble. Some came back ill. Some coughed up blood, and some were vomiting blood. Some had wounds on their backs and others had wounds on their sides. We took pity on them when we saw them. Before they started carrying things some people said to the soldiers, “It’s too heavy, we can’t carry this. How can we carry this?” Then the soldiers kicked them and said, “Why do you ask before carrying?” Before they crossed the river some people asked, “If we cross the river will the cement get wet?” Then the soldiers slapped their faces and said, “Why do you ask before you cross the river?” Then when the people crossed the river and the cement got wet they kicked them and hit them again and said, “Don’t you know that the cement will be destroyed and we can’t use it if it gets wet?” They hurt many people that time. The commander who forced the people to carry cement is Kyay Lay Oo. He abused many people at that time.

So people saw that the Burmese all behave differently. Each one of them works differently and has different rules. If we look for the source we see that they all get their orders from the same leaders, but they come and order the people around differently. The people couldn’t stand it any more, so they fled for the second time. The people from Kwih Kler, Meh Tharaw Hta, Pu Chit Mu, Ter Wah Law, Lay Th’Ray, and Tee Po Khaw all fled because the Burmese persecuted those people, forced them to work as forced laborers and to be porters. We had pity on those people when we saw them in such a bad situation. After that there were more people from faraway places who fled here, because they were in a terrible situation too. We had not seen them before, because they lived far from us. We didn’t know what kind of problems they’d had to suffer. But we knew that they were in a very bad situation because they came from many villages, such as Yah Ther Hta, Noh Maw Po, Waw Lu, Klaw Day, Lay Po Hta, Na Htee Kloh, and from many other villages that we

didn't even know the names of! Also Meh Dter, Meh Ku, Htee Ka Bprah, Toh Doh Neh, many villages. Some fled up here to live with us, and some fled onwards to other places too. They fled into Thailand but they couldn't get into Noh Po refugee camp. They were coming from faraway places, and people let them stay along the pathways. It was very hard for them to get food. They were destitute. So we looked at them and had pity on them, and we were very disappointed with the people who ruled over the population. When they lived in Burma the Burmese persecuted them. When they went to stay in Thailand, the Thai didn't love them either. We saw the Thais push them up and down and hit them until they were wounded. They ran to Baw Ner Hta, some had no food to eat nor good water to drink, so they drank dirty water and got diarrhea, and then many people died of diarrhea on the mountainsides. This was a big problem that we couldn't solve. Then the Burmese and Thais wanted the people to go back to Burma. The people didn't dare to go back because they were too worried that the Burmese would harm them, but the Thais said they wouldn't allow them to live in Thailand anymore. It was a very big problem.

Just after Kyay Lay Oo forced people to carry cement, the monk of Myaing Gyi Ngu [U Thuzana, founder and leader of the DKBA] sent some DKBA people to us and they told us that if we were vegetarians and did everything the monk [Thuzana] ordered, the Burmese wouldn't come to our village to harm us again. They said, "If the villagers follow the plan of the Myaing Gyi Ngu monk, they will be free from forced labor and portering and the Burmese will not hit them or kill them anymore." The villagers felt very happy to hear that. Everyone decided to become DKBA and they started to eat as vegetarians, but after a few days the DKBA people disappeared. They went back secretly without saying goodbye to anybody. When they first came the villagers were very happy to hear what they said, but those people left the villagers hopeless when they went back secretly. [They were ordered back to Pa-an district by the SPDC, to be replaced by KPA.]

After that the KPA came and told the villagers, "If you put your name on the KPA list the Burmese won't force you to do forced labor and portering. Now we must live in peace. But if you don't put your name on the KPA list the Burmese will force you to do forced labor and portering". The Burmese force people to work harder than they are able, not as parents ask their children to work. If they made us to work as parents ask their children to work, we could try to bear it. We know that people who are in politics must force the public to work, but the Burmese force the people to work harder than the law, it's not just. So the villagers want to be free from this forced labor and portering, and they agreed to become KPA if they would be free from forced labor.

But when we held a meeting to talk about becoming KPA, the KPA came and ordered us to become soldiers. They said that KPA soldiers would not need to go to other places, that they could stay at home [based in their home villages]. Then some people from Kwih Kler and Meh Naw Dah Hta joined the KPA army. But the KPA never kept those people in their own homes, they sent them away to other villages. And now we've got a message that they tried to escape from the army! So then we couldn't decide anything about whether to become KPA or not, and we still don't know how to solve that problem for the people. We hope that the Burmese will love their children as our families love their villages and will try to solve these problems for the people, but when the people came up here the Burmese asked the Thais to drive them back, and when they went back the Burmese persecuted them. So we are worried. The people are good, but when people can't continue

and have to suffer, they can become bad.

Last month they gathered up the people and divided them into two groups. One group was to be a people's army [i.e. regular KPA] and the other group was to be village defenders who would be sentries in each village. They took their training in Kwih Kalay and the leader told them that they could stay in their own houses after the training, but after they finished they were not allowed to stay in their own homes. There were 50 of them in that training. The leader sent them from Kyaikdon to Kya In Seik Gyi, so then they knew that their leader did differently than what he said and many of them tried to escape. They ran away and hid themselves, they didn't want to go to other villages, they couldn't agree with their leader because he'd said they wouldn't have to leave their homes. We don't know how to help the people who are in this trouble now. Many people will flee here, many people have already fled from Thailand back to Burma because the Thais gave them no security and they were afraid, and I am afraid that they will have to face hunger. They won't have a chance to work their lands, and maybe some will become robbers. It is just like the period when the Japanese and the English were fighting each other. A lot of hunger and robbery occurred during that time. The best thing is that now the English are taking care of the refugee camps, but now the Thais won't allow the new people who flee to go to the refugee camps. When they go back to Burma the Burmese don't feed them either, so they are caught in the middle and hungry. I'm worried that they will kill each other in the fight for food, so I hope the rulers of the world will look and see this happening, meet with the SPDC and solve this problem.

If they don't do it, we who live on the border must be afraid. We are afraid both of the people who are being driven and of those who drive them, so I hope that the big men of the English and the Thais will meet with each other and think about how to take care of these people in a terrible situation. If the politicians are selfish then it will only become worse for these people.

Q: Are the KPA still saying that the Dta La Ku people must become soldiers?

A: Last month they were still saying that, but they haven't said anything this month. I will tell you: Many Dta La Ku fled to Thailand but they stayed together near here, not at the refugee camp. They fled because the Burmese forced them to do hard labor and portering. They fled from ID 44 and LIB 356, then they went back again but No. 61 came and forced them to carry heavy things so they fled again. Then the DKBA came and told them if they became DKBA they would be free from harm by the SLORC, so they waited for the DKBA's help. But the DKBA disappeared. Then the KPA appeared and ordered the Dta La Ku to become soldiers, but the people didn't want to carry weapons because they knew that even if they didn't use them to shoot at others, those others would shoot at them.

So when we had the New Year festival, many of us headmen held a meeting and we talked about how we must be faithful to our religion and follow the rules of our religion. That is easy to tell people, but not so easy to do because we are a minority who live among other peoples. We Dta La Ku must not drink or touch alcohol, we must not eat or touch pork, and we must not rear pigs. But if we live among the Burmese we cannot do as our rules say, and that makes us sad. If the Burmese order us to go and find alcohol and bring it to them we must do it because we are afraid of them. While we are portering for the Burmese we do not dare say anything against them when they put sausage or ham or the

head of a pig in our carrying basket. So how can we live as our religion dictates? Not only that, now they say we must carry guns. Even though we know that the words of our [Dta La Ku] leaders are right, we cannot observe them if we live among other people. So we headmen talked about that, and at last we decided that we would go to the Burmese leaders and ask them to give the Dta La Ku people a chance to live all together in Taung Ka Lay and Kwih Kler, in Burma but near the border, not on the Thai side. I think the Burmese will allow it. We will do nothing against them. If they come to our place or pass through it we hope that they will not persecute us, but if they do persecute us then we will run away again. Not only the people from Taung Ka Lay will flee, the people from other places will flee also. I think the Burmese will agree with us because the place we have chosen is near our religious centre and it will be easy for us to go to our festivals. If we live further away and we need to go to a festival we must pass many armies; if the Burmese SPDC allow us to go, maybe the DKBA will not allow us, if the DKBA allow us then maybe the KPA will not allow us, or if the KPA allow us then maybe the KNU will not allow us. Now many of our headmen have gone to the Burmese leaders to ask them. If the Burmese love us and do not want our religion to be destroyed, they ought to give us what we need.

When we look at KNU soldiers, their commander orders them to go to the villages and to help the villagers, to take care of them because the SLORC harms them. But some KNU soldiers enter the villages and order the villagers to give money, 10,000 or 20,000 Kyat, and they say that if the villagers don't give the money then they will shoot at the Burmese around the village. So the people are afraid and try to give it to them, even if they don't have enough money for themselves. They must give to KNU, to SLORC, to KPA and to DKBA too. The people have hard lives because they have to give money to many groups even though they don't have enough food for themselves. That is the big problem for them. If you go and ask anybody about what they have to suffer, they will tell you the same. Now there are a lot of KNLA in Burma. Sometimes they disturb us when we go to our festivals, they say to us, "Do not go or I will shoot you." Sometimes the villagers want to sell their wooden houses to buy rice and move to Kwih Lat Der or Taung Ka Lay, and the KNLA ask those villagers for half the price of their house; for example if we sell our house and get 20,000 kyat we must give 10,000 kyat to the KNLA. They tell us, "If you don't want to give half the price of your house then you must not sell it." So now our Dta La Ku people need to live in Kwih Lat Der and Taung Ka Lay and just to make our land peaceful. We won't live in Thailand. Dta La Ku people who live on the Thai side have no chance to do farming, so if they stay for a long time they will have no food.

On March 20, 1998 a Thai official came and held a meeting near our monastery and told us that all the Dta La Ku people who have been staying around here must go back to Burma because he said everyone trusts the Dta La Ku, that the Dta La Ku can travel freely because the police never rob or interrogate them. But then he said that the people who burned down Huay Kaloke [refugee camp] were Dta La Ku, that the Dta La Ku who are staying in Thailand now are spies for the SPDC and burned down the [refugee] camps. I was so mad I wanted to hit him! I told him at once: "Every Dta La Ku who lives in Thailand and Burma puts their name on a list, and gives it to me once every year. Every Dta La Ku name is on my list. If you say that the Dta La Ku attacked the camp then capture those Dta La Ku and bring them to me. I will see whether they are real Dta La Ku or fake Dta La Ku!" Then he said nothing. But I know that if we do not live in the same place

together, other people will try to destroy our Dta La Ku culture. I know that the people who attacked Huay Kaloke were not from around here. Maybe they were DKBA. There are some DKBA who tie their hair in a knot and carry weapons. We don't like that. There are some people who tie their hair in a knot and wear clothes like ours who live in Thailand, in Maw Kwa and Paw T'Ga Hta. They drink alcohol a lot. We don't like that either, because it destroys the name of the Dta La Ku who live here. I always think about these things. We are good, but other people do not see us as good. They think that we are bad, so we don't know what to do. We do good things but get bad in return, and eventually we can't stand it anymore. I hope that the Thai, English and Burmese will think and have pity and do something for the Dta La Ku people to be able to live together in one place.

Q: Are there still some villagers in Kwih Lat Der village now?

A: Yes, some villagers still stay in Kwih Lat Der, Taung Ka Lay, Kay Ghaw, Tee Ler Baw and Naw Po Heh. These villages are close to each other. Now the KPA and the Burmese come there. There are no DKBA now, but there are SPDC in Kwih Lat Der. They come and go, they don't stay there all the time. Now they are No. 62 [Infantry Battalion]. Their battalion commander is Than Win, and their company commander is also named Than Win.

Interview 27: Refugee, Forced labor, Killing

Name:	"Saw Kaser Doh"
Sex:	Male
Age:	40+
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married, 5 children aged 5-23
Address:	Kawkareik township; now in Section 6 of Maw Ker refugee camp for 5 years
Date of interviewed:	March 27, 1998
Source:	KHRG

Q: Why did you come to live in the camp?

A: I have been in Maw Ker for five years. I dared not stay in my village because the Burmese soldiers tortured us, so we came to stay in the camp.

Q: Can you tell me what happened that night?

A: I hadn't heard anything before, but that night I saw something strange. I saw someone holding a torch light [outside the camp], and he turned the light on. I told the security [Karen security], "I saw a light over there." The security told me, "Maybe it was a Thai hunter," so we just stayed there, waiting and listening. I was staying with the sentries. There were four or five sentries. It was 1 a.m. so we were sleepy. We slept less than one hour, then they shot at us and we ran. We had to run, because we had nothing [to shoot back with]. They came into the camp at 1:30 a.m. They came on foot, by the path beside the monastery. First four soldiers came and they spoke Karen, they said, "Taw, taw, taw!"

[“Go on, go on, go on!” in Karen]. After that Burmese soldiers came also; they said, “Dteh! Dteh! Dteh!!” [“Go on! Go on! Go on!” in Burmese]. They shot at us with 79’s [M79 grenade launchers] and 21/2-inch [mortars]. They shot with heavy weapons and they fired small guns. I didn’t see any RPG’s [rocket-propelled grenades]. If the soldiers had shot at us with an RPG, we would all be dead now. An M79 shell landed near us. It didn’t hit me but my friend Kyaw Wah got injured.

I couldn’t do anything. They shot at us, I ran back home and my friends ran to the monastery. I ran back home and I called out to everyone [to warn them], but I couldn’t call all the people and I ran into a bunker. When I reached the bunker, the soldiers were also arriving and they were burning the houses. They shot their guns and burned the houses at the same time. They shot for nearly one hour. The first place they shot up was Section 6. Some soldiers could have been injured because they shot at each other by mistake. One group entered the camp and another group stayed behind them, so when the second group fired their guns the shells landed near their friends.

Q: Did you hear them saying anything?

A: They didn’t say anything around me. They asked the people who live in Section 6 about the Muslims, they said: “Where are the Muslims’ houses?” The one who asked the question spoke Karen. When they arrived in Section 4, their commander came to call them back and they went back. The commander talked to his soldiers in Karen.

In the dark, it looked like they were wearing streaked [camouflaged] uniforms. Their hats looked like Burmese army hats. I can’t say what guns they were carrying. I think M16 and AK 47. They were not drunk. I didn’t hear if they will come back again. We were too much afraid. I was afraid that they would shoot at me and the bullets would hit me.

Q: Did the Thai soldiers shoot at them?

A: No, they didn’t fire their guns but one group of Thai soldiers stayed near the Ler Ghaw Kee road and they fired one or two times. When the Burmese soldiers fired into the camp, the Thais fired back only one or two times.

Q: Which sections were burned down?

A: Sections 6 and 7, they didn’t burn the other sections. Fifty houses were burned down and one monastery. Its name was Than Manee monastery. They shot at it and they burned it. They also set fire to the other monastery [Wah Lay monastery] but the big monastery didn’t burn, only the small one burned down. The fire also burned down the community hall. The fire truck came after the shooting. We also tried to put out the fire. They came to put out the fire with water just before sunrise.

Q: Since then have the Thai soldiers said anything?

A: No, they didn’t say anything at first, but yesterday the Thai soldiers said, “Don’t run away, we think that they will not come again.” Now they come and guard the villagers all day. They said to us, “If you hear something, please tell us.” But I don’t understand Thai language, so I don’t understand exactly what they said.

Interview 28: Refugee, Livelihood, Killing

1. Name:	“Saw Say Muh”	2. Name:	“Naw Paw Thu”
Sex:	Male	Sex:	Female
Age	30+	Age:	30+
Ethnicity:	Karen	Ethnicity:	Karen

Family: Married, 2 children aged 5 and 8
 Address: Hlaing Bwe township; now in Section 6 of Maw Ker refugee camp only 1 month
 Date of interviewed: March 27, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[“Saw Say Muh” and “Naw Paw Thu” are married, and only recently arrived in Maw Ker.]

Q: Can you tell me what happened that night?”

Saw Say Muh”: The soldiers entered the camp and burned down the houses. We heard them calling “Go on, go on!” I don’t know which way they came into the camp, because when I heard the shells I ran into the bunker. They fired a lot of heavy weapons. They fired both heavy weapons and small weapons. I saw a shell from an M79. We stayed in the bunker because they were shelling us with heavy weapons. At that time they hadn’t burned my house yet.

Boy: They fired M79, AK47, M16, and rifle grenades. They started to burn the houses at 1:15 a.m.

“Naw Paw Thu”: We heard the soldiers who came up in front shouting at the soldiers who were behind them firing their guns, “Nga lo ma tha! Why are you firing your guns while we are in front of you?” [‘Nga lo ma tha!’ is Burmese for ‘Motherfuckers!’] They talked like this. We stayed in the bunker and we listened. When we were hiding in the bunker, the soldiers called us so we got out from the bunker. A soldier asked me, “Where is your village?” I said, “Our village is Lay Po Paw Ler.”

“Saw Say Muh”: I saw two soldiers. They asked me, “Are you a villager?” I said, “Yes, I am a villager.” The soldiers told us to get out, so we got out of the bunker and they burned down our house. One soldier carried an AK47 and another soldier carried a Karen bag, an Esso oil bottle and a lighter. He poured the Esso oil on the house and set fire to it. Then they shot at the house and they said, “Go into the bunker.” They spoke Karen. One soldier wore a plain colour uniform and the other one wore a camouflage uniform, but I didn’t see their hats. After the soldiers had burned the other houses, they burned down the Than Manee monastery on their way back, then they went straight to the road and left the camp.

Q: Could you save your belongings?

“Saw Say Muh”: We kept our things in my auntie’s house, and all of them were burned.

“Naw Paw Thu”: Every night I went to sleep there, while my husband slept alone at home.

Q: What time did the Thai soldiers and the fire truck come?

“Saw Say Muh”: The Thai soldiers came just before sunrise, and they fired their heavy weapons just before sunrise. They couldn’t shoot at them [DKBA and SPDC] because they were already far away from the camp. They had already gone back and probably reached their camp by then. I am sure they could have reached their camp if they went straight, because the distance from here to Wah Lay is not far. When the fire truck came, the villagers had already put out the fire. It was already half past two in the morning. When the people put out the fire, our house had already burned down. There were two sections burned down, Sections 6 and 7. The other sections were not burned down. There were 45 houses in Section 6 and five houses in Section 7 that burned down. The total was 50 houses.

Interview 29: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name:	“Saw Eh K’Lu”
Sex:	Male
Age:	24
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married, 1 child aged 18 months
Address:	Pa-an District; now in Section 6 of Maw Ker refugee camp for 3 years
Date of interviewed:	March 28, 1998
Source:	KHRG

Q: What did you see the night of the attack? A: I don’t know how many soldiers entered the camp, maybe more than 30 or 40 soldiers. We woke up when they started to fire big guns. I had no watch and I wouldn’t have thought to look at a watch anyway. Then the soldiers came to my house. I didn’t know that they were coming. When I heard the explosions, they reached the house and I ran down to the bunker. Then I looked at them. I saw just three or four soldiers. They were all wearing the same Burmese uniform, a black uniform. They also wore yellow scarves. I saw yellow on their shoulders but I dared not look closely. They were holding guns. I saw one RPG [rocket-propelled grenade launcher]. They spoke Sgaw Karen. They didn’t say anything to me, because I was in the bunker. I heard them asking where the Muslims’ houses were. I heard some soldiers speaking Burmese, they were staying near the monastery. I heard them but we didn’t see the soldiers who stayed behind the monastery. Then the soldiers said, “Burn this house.” My house was the first they burned down, it was house number xxx. Everything was burned except my child’s clothes. It took them about five minutes to burn the houses nearby. Then they moved near the monastery.

Another man: They entered separately, they entered in three groups. One group went straight to his house, the second group went to Section 7, and the third group stayed behind the monastery. After they burned the houses they all went near the monastery and then left

the camp. We heard that it was not the DKBA who live here [just across the border from Maw Ker], they were from further away and the name of their chief is Chit Thu [Maung Chit Thu, a DKBA commander in Pa'an district further north].

Q: Can you build a new house?

A: We have some plastic sheeting. What we will do depends on the authorities. If they give the order, we will build a new house.

Interview 30: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name: "Naw Ghay Hser"
 Sex: Female
 Age: 24
 Ethnicity: Sgaw Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married, 2 children aged 1 and 3
 Address: Doolaya District; now in Section 7 of Maw Ker refugee camp
 Date of interviewed: March 28, 1998
 Source: KHRG

Q: How long have you been living in Maw Ker?

A: We have been staying in Maw Ker for a long time. When the situation was good we went back and stayed beside the river [in Burma]. Then when the situation there got too bad we came back here, and we've been staying here for three years since then.

Q: Can you tell me what happened that night?

A: During the night we were sleeping, but we dared not sleep in our bunker so we ran to another bunker. They shot for a short time, not even an hour. We heard the soldiers calling, "Go on! Go on! Go on!" in Karen, and one asked his friend for a lighter. Another soldier said, "Don't burn, please don't burn," but they set fire to the houses. After they had finished setting fire to the houses, all the men [in the bunker] stood up and looked around. They saw the fire burning down the houses, so we got out and started to run. I was afraid and I took my children away. I looked at my watch and it was half past one. We ran directly to the main road of the camp. I don't know what happened after that because I had already run away, but others who stayed behind said they heard the soldiers asking, "Where are the Muslims' houses?" and they answered, "Sections 7 and 8." Some people saw the soldiers. They were Karen and they were wearing short pants. We didn't see the soldiers, we just heard them. When they entered, they met a man with his wife. That man and his wife were afraid of them so they said to the soldiers, "Don't kill us, don't kill us." The soldiers said: "We won't kill you. Many soldiers are coming. Go in the bunker." After that they burned down the houses. They didn't do anything to the people because they had no weapons in their hands. They only burned down the houses, they didn't hurt people because we are all Karen, we don't want to hurt each other. But the Burmese soldiers were staying behind, and they fired shells into the camp.

Q: Do you know how many families are now homeless?

A: Fifty houses burned down. About five houses burned down in Section 7, and many houses burned down in Section 6.

Interview 31: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name: "Pi Lah Say"
 Sex: Female
 Age: 55
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married, 6 children aged 13-30
 Address: Dooplaya District; now in Section 7 of Maw Ker refugee camp for 2 years
 Date of interviewed: March 28, 1998
 Source: KHRG

Q: Can you tell me what happened that night?

A: They fired their guns first, they didn't burn the camp first. They burned down the camp after they had stopped shooting for quite a long time. They fired big bombs and I also heard the sound of small guns. When they were shooting I tried to carry my children but I could only grab my child by the legs [because she was panicking]. Then we were hiding in the bunker. We saw two people coming and burning the houses. When the fire started to get bigger we ran away and I fell down on the way. I cut my legs so badly that I didn't dare to look at them.

Other people saw the soldiers but I was afraid. I didn't dare lift my head up to look, so I didn't see. The people from that house said they saw two soldiers. The Section 5 leader saw them too because the fire was burning brightly. That was when my house burned down. Two soldiers came and set fire to the houses. They were saying, "We will burn, we will burn." They spoke in Sgaw Karen. They didn't burn the monastery, but the Burmese soldiers' bomb fell on it.

Q: Do you think that the DKBA is good for Buddhists?

Another woman: I don't think that they are good for all Buddhists - it depends on the luck of the Buddhist who meets the DKBA. The DKBA came and shouted: "Where are the Muslims?" Maybe they hate the Muslims.

A: Yes they really did that, they asked everyone, "Where are the Muslims?"

Q: Do you think you'll rebuild your house here, or will you move?

A: If we can live here, we will live here; if we can't live here, we won't. I will follow the others. If they dare to live here then I will live here too, but if not then I also won't dare to stay.

Interview 32: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing, Religion

Name: "U Than Myint"
 Sex: Male
 Age: 47
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: farmer
 Family: Married, 4 children aged 20-23
 Address: Hlaing Bwe township; now in Section 6 of Maw Ker refugee camp
 Date of interviewed: March 28, 1998
 Source: KHRG

Q: Can you tell me what happened that night?

A: They entered, fired their guns and burned down the houses. When they came I don't know, we just heard the explosions at 1:15 a.m. on March 23. The shells landed nearby and we all woke up. At first I thought that the Thai soldiers had fired something. I kept listening. I was not running yet. I had to find my family.

The soldiers came straight to the monastery. They came straight and they shouted, "Go on, go on!" and they started fires. Women and children were hiding in the bunkers. I saw the fire and the soldiers calling, "Go on, go on, go on!" I heard one soldier who was holding a walkie-talkie. He said in the Karen language, "Don't fire the gun, don't fire the gun," but his friends fired. One soldier was shouting in Burmese, "Nga lo ma tha!! We are in front of you, why are you firing the gun at us?" ['Nga lo ma tha' is Burmese for 'Motherfucker'.] When the soldiers went to one place, the other soldiers shot at that place. If it was me I would be angry with the Burmese soldiers [who were firing from behind]. I would have turned my gun against them and shot at them. I heard one soldier speaking Pwo Karen. I thought he must be DKBA and I dared not go out.

First they fired big weapons and then they fired small guns. After they were shooting for about 10 minutes we couldn't see them anymore. They went to Section 7 and I didn't see which way they were going out of the camp. They burned down the monastery as they were on their way out. I don't know how they burned it, you'd have to ask the monks. They didn't burn the community hall [a community hall for religious use, associated with the monastery], but when they fired heavy weapons the shells hit it and burned it. They didn't burn all the houses, they only burned some houses and then the fire spread to all the houses. I saw four of them, and the others were over there. I saw them when the fire started. Some were DKBA and some were Burmese. The Burmese soldiers were shooting guns and the DKBA burned the houses. I could not stay for long, the fire was too hot.

Q: What language did they speak?

A: They spoke Karen language, not Burmese. The soldiers who spoke Burmese stayed behind the monastery. They were the ones who were shelling with heavy weapons. It was mostly Burmese soldiers shooting the heavy weapons, two mortars and M79 [grenades].

I saw four soldiers coming this way and the others were over there; they were not too young. The ones who came over here were carrying guns, and one soldier was carrying

a big bag. One soldier didn't have a gun and the other three soldiers were holding guns; AK 47, M 16. They were wearing military uniforms. I also saw one soldier with a yellow scarf but I didn't see their hats. Some soldiers were wearing a plain uniform and one soldier was wearing a camouflage uniform. The soldier who wore the camouflage uniform said, "Don't touch me, don't touch me!" I dared not touch him. He was holding a gun. He thought that I would hit him.

They shot at my house. They shot six times or seven times. I saw pieces of shells. When they shot at my house, I looked out the top of the bunker and I looked at them. They looked down into the bunker before they burned down my house, and they asked, "Are you a villager or what?" I said, "Yes I am a villager, we are not soldiers." They didn't ask me my religion, they asked me, "Where is your village?" I said "Paw Law Lay village, Hlaing Bwe township." After that we ran away because we were afraid. Then they burned my house down.

Q: Did they look drunk or as if they had used stimulants?

A: I don't know, I dared not look. They would shoot me if I looked directly at them. I can't tell you. When they burned the houses they were shivering. They were shaking, their legs were also shaking. Maybe they were afraid. When they heard the bombs they sat down on the ground. What were they afraid of? The KNU is not in the camp!

Q: Could you save any of your things?

A: I dared not carry anything, I dared not go into the house. My pots, plates and clothes, everything burned. Now I have only the clothes I am wearing.

Q: Did they ask for the Muslims?

A: The DKBA asked us: "Where is the Muslims' section?" They asked but they never arrived there. When the fire was blazing they left the camp, they didn't dare stay. They were worried that someone would shoot at them. After they had been gone for quite a while, the Thai soldiers started to fire their guns. They fired their guns in the morning, before sunrise. They fired four shells at the same time. One shell landed near where the Burmese soldiers stay, near Wah Lay monastery [Wah Lay on the Burma side of the border, not in the refugee camp], and another shell landed in the Thai village.

We got out of the bunker when the people put out the fire. It was about 2:30 a.m. Then the Thai soldiers came. The fire trucks came just before sunrise; when the Thai soldiers and the fire trucks came to the camp it was already 4:30 a.m. and the fire was already put out. Fifty houses were burned down in the camp: 5 houses in Section 7 and 45 houses in Section 6. Including the monastery and the hall it would be 52. Altogether there are over 300 houses in Section 6.

Q: Do you think that they will come again?

A: I can't tell, I didn't hear anything. But since that happened, we run away to sleep [outside the camp] every night.

Q: Do the Thai soldiers still come?

A: Yes, they come to arrange security for us. Now they stay behind the monastery. Yesterday

they came to hold a meeting. They didn't call all the villagers, they called only the men. They said, "Do you dare to shoot the Burmese?" The villagers answered, "Yes, we dare. If you call us [to fight], many people will go." They asked how many people had been soldiers and the ones who had been soldiers before stood up. Then they asked, "How many people can speak Thai?" The villagers who could speak Thai stood up. Then, "How many Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims are in the camp?" After that they told us, "Don't be afraid. You must live peacefully. You must join with the Thai. If we ask you for your support, you must give us your support." We promised to help them. They asked another question: "If you had guns, would you dare to shoot the enemy?" We said, "We dare to shoot." I didn't hear them say that they would give us guns, but they told us that we must obey the Thais because we are in Thailand. They said, "Don't be afraid, but you have to be careful, you have to dig a good bunker." I didn't hear that we have to move, but they were speaking in Thai so I couldn't understand everything.

Q: How long have you been in this camp?

A: Not even one year. It will be one year this Water Festival [mid-April 1998]. We couldn't stay in our village, because we were afraid of Burmese soldiers and sometimes of the DKBA too. I had to go portering and sometimes I had to go as a forced labor. I had to go portering for three days at a time, and if I couldn't go we had to pay 1,000 *Kyat*. We had a lot of difficulty finding 1,000 *Kyat*. And forced labour! I had to build a road all the time. We had to build the road very far from my village in Pa'an district, in Zar Tha Bhin. We started to build the road from Hlaing Bwe to Pa'an, and all the other roads too. We had to take food for ourselves. The DKBA forced us to work for the Burmese. The Burmese commanded the DKBA to do it, and then the DKBA forced us to work. When we stay in our village the Burmese and the DKBA force us to work. Now when we stay in the camp, they burn my house. Will our lives always be like this? I don't know.

Interview 33: Livelihood, Refugee, Killing

Name:	"Pu Lay Ko"
Sex:	Male
Age:	59
Ethnicity:	Karen
Family:	Married, 6 children aged 16-30
Address:	Hlaing Bwe township; now in Section 6 of Maw Ker refugee camp
Date of interviewed:	March 28, 1998
Source:	KHRG

Q: Can you tell me what happened that night?

A: The soldiers came to the camp at 1:15 a.m. I was staying in the house. At that time we were already asleep. I have six children, but that night only three of us were at home because my other children had gone to M— with my wife. I was sleeping in one room with my two daughters and a friend was sleeping in the other room with her daughter. There were a lot of explosions but at first we didn't wake up. We woke up when a shell landed in the toilets. When I heard that they were shooting I jumped down from the house. My

daughters are old enough to run by themselves, but I couldn't carry my belongings. Then we stayed in the bunker. After we had been in the bunker for a while, my daughter told me, "Our house is burning". I lifted up my head [above the tip of the bunker], looked outside and saw that they were burning my house. I wanted to go back home to get my belongings, but my daughters pulled me back because the house was already burning, so I went back into the bunker. I couldn't save anything. We just looked at the house burning.

I didn't see the soldiers who burned our house. I thought that they must have gone to burn other houses, so we stayed in the bunker. They went straight over that way, and then they went back at about 2:30 a.m.

His daughter: Pa, you stayed in the bunker and you didn't see, why are you talking as though you had seen everything?

"Pu Lay Ko": I'm just guessing. I dared not look. I didn't see when they were leaving. I don't know which way they went back. I stayed with my daughters. I can guess.

Q: Did you hear them talking?

A: No, I didn't hear. They didn't ask me anything because they couldn't see me. We didn't see anything. My daughter pulled me back when I stood up and looked outside. My daughter told me, "Leave it in the fire Pa, let the house burn in the fire." I couldn't do anything. Nobody dared to look, everybody stayed in the bunker. We didn't sleep, we just sat quietly and listened. We waited until all the houses had burned down and then we got out of the bunker, we looked around and we didn't see anything. I looked at the sky and I saw the stars. It was already almost morning. By that time the fire had already been put out. The section leader came to find out how many houses had burned down, he wrote it down in his notebook and went back.

His daughter: We got out when the people were warming themselves near the embers of the burned houses.

Q: How long have you been staying here in Maw Ker?

A: I've been around here for 14 years, since before the refugee camp. First we left our village and stayed in Thay Baw Boe [just across the border in Burma]. In those days there was no problem.

Interview 34: Arrest, Livelihood, Torture, Forced Labor, Relocation

Name:	"Naw Eh Ghaw"
Sex:	Female
Age:	53
Ethnicity:	Karen
religion:	Christian
Occupation:	Missionary
Marital Status:	Married with four children
Address:	Meh Tharaw Hta village, Dooplaya district, Karen State

Date of interview: April 1998
Source: KHRG

[*“Naw Eh Ghay” was interviewed in Noh Po refugee camp.*]

Q: Since you came here did you ever go back [to Dooplaya] to visit?

A: I went back the first time to Kwih Kler village, then I went back again during my children’s school vacation. The situation in Burma is too bad. The people live in fear. Every time the SLORC [SPDC] army comes the men have to run away and hide, because they try to capture the men whenever they come. Every day six people must go to stay with them so that they can use them whenever they need them. Wherever they want to go those six people must go with them and carry their things, which are very heavy, sometimes until they cannot carry any more. Sometimes they have to do other work, and sometimes it is dangerous. People who do not dare to go must give 1,500 *kyat* for three days [in lieu of three days of work]. If people don’t go then the Burmese will never set free the previous group. People must always stay with them and keep rotating.

Then they brought prisoners [convicts] up into the jungle on army trucks. Along the way they tied the prisoners’ necks and hands tightly to the sides of the trucks and made them stand up straight. When they arrived at the T’Ku Kee church they let them get down from the truck. Some prisoners couldn’t stand up any more and they fell down. The soldiers saw that and kicked them and hit them until they became unconscious. Then they picked them up and dragged them under a shady tree. I heard that they will use those prisoners to do road construction. The road will go from Kyaikdon to Kya In Seik Gyi. I know the prisoners are in Kyaikdon right now because I saw Auntie S— at the Bible School there and she told me, “Now Kyaikdon is full of Burmese military and prisoners. They’ve probably brought the prisoners to do road construction.” Right now the villagers aren’t doing road construction because they have to rotate doing forced labor in the army camp full time, and they must go and do whatever the soldiers order them to do at any time.

Q: Before you came back here did you hear about any villages being forced to move?

A: Now Kalay Kee and Kyaw Kay Ko have to relocate because the Burmese accused them of feeding the KNLA, so the Burmese won’t allow them to stay there any more. The people of Kyaw Kay Ko have to move to Kya In and the people from Kalay Kee have to move to T’Ku Kee. I heard that relocations will also occur in many other places. Even the villagers in Kya In [western Dooplaya] must move to the roadside. I also heard one village headwoman say, “If I’m going to build a house I will build it at the roadside, because we must move there anyway.” I heard her say that in H—’s shop in Seik Gyi.

Before the 11th [of March or April 1998] they arrested villagers from Kya In and put them in jail. They beat them badly. I didn’t see them when they were beaten but I saw their wives and children who had to give bribes to save them. Finally they set them free after many people had come and vouched for them, but they had to pay 10,000 *kyat* for each villager to be freed. Not only that, they had to buy clothes and food for the soldiers too. The arrested people were villagers of Kya In. I don’t know their names, but a younger brother of Pastor Tha Du was among them.

The villagers there are afraid of them and have to give money to them all the time.

They must give them whatever food they want whenever they ask for it. If the villagers don't give it to them then they just steal whatever they want. They always demand rice, vegetables, salt and fish paste. I saw that happening in T'Ku Kee. When I went back there I didn't have a chance to ask about too many things, and I often had to hide and couldn't dare go outside. But I heard about many things from the villagers there who have to live in fear.

Interview 35: Refugee, Relocation, Torture, Forced Labor

Name: "Saw Lay Doh"
 Sex: Male
 Age: 33
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Occupation: Farmer/teacher
 Marital Status: Married with six children
 Address: Waw Lu village, Dooplaya district, Karen State
 Date of interview: April 1998
 Source: KHRG

["Saw Lay Doh" arrived in Thailand in late 1997 and was present when the Thai Army fired on refugees at Thay Pu Law Htwee. He and many of the others were finally allowed into Noh Po refugee camp, but at the time of the interview they were still living in long open shelters because Thai authorities had not allowed them to build proper huts.]

Q: Can you tell me about the situation of your village?

A: In February 1997, SLORC troops from No. 22 [Division], Battalion No. 206, camped in Waw Lu village and they called the villagers who had fled from the village during the fighting to come back to the village. They said to us that they had not come to kill or make problems for the people, that they had come to make peace. Then the villagers all came back. After that they held a meeting with the villagers in the monastery of Waw Lu, and they said "Come and give us your arms; we won't do anything to those who give us their arms." They pressed the villagers to hand over some weapons. So finally the villagers had to show them the guns of the village defence force [villagers armed by the KNLA to defend their village]. But after that they still accused and pressured the people to give them more arms. They said to some village headmen, "You have guns and walkie-talkies, so you must give us all of them." They frightened those village headmen until they had to give up whatever they were hiding. After that they asked the village headmen to build a new school. The villagers cut wood and bamboo and built the school and fenced it. After that they called for teachers and let them teach there for a month in April. There were four teachers, I was one of them.

Q: What about the villagers who had no guns to give them?

A: After they made their camp, they forced the villagers who had no guns to carry their things as porters. They had to carry bullets and rations when the soldiers went from place

to place to find their enemies. Each person must carry three big tins of rice. We saw some people who got wounds on their backs. Their backs were bruised. Sometimes they had to carry things for three days, sometimes four days. While they were carrying the heavy things the soldiers forced them to run. If they could not run the soldiers kicked their buttocks. If people couldn't understand their language [Burmese] when they gave orders the soldiers hit them too. The villagers who came back from portering explained that it was very hard for them to suffer like that. I know a person who had to carry things to Po Theh. The Burmese soldiers asked him a question but he could not understand Burmese, so they hurt him. They hit him with the butt of their gun.

My nephew once came back from portering for the Burmese soldiers, and at my house he told me how the soldiers had forced him to carry heavy things for four days. He showed me his wounded back which was really badly bruised. His name is Saw E—. He told me that he had to climb up the mountains while carrying heavy things, and that when they went to Meh K'Waw it made him cry because it was such hard work. There was another man from Po Yay village whose name was Saw Eh Wah, and he had to climb up the hills with heavy things for the Burmese soldiers to pass through the Maw Law Ee way. While he was going he became sweaty and exhausted from carrying the heavy things. At last his foot slipped and he fell down to the foot of the mountain. His load was still up on the path. He was going to die but nobody took care of him. Everyone passed him by. That's why we can say that their behaviour is terrible toward the villagers. Saw Eh Wah is about 40 years old. He is better now.

Ever since they started to settle down in Waw Lu they've forced the villagers to provide labor every day. There is no payment. They never give food, and they never give medicine. They force the villagers to dig bunkers and to work for them in Kyaikdon, but the villagers must take along their own rice. If they don't take their own rice then they have to go hungry. And they always ask the villagers, "Have any of you seen any of the arms that people are hiding?"

Q: Why did you have to flee the village?

A: As for my situation, while they were staying there they accused me of working for the outside people [the KNLA]. They said I was breaking their law so they would arrest me. I was a teacher. At that time the school had already closed. They arrested me and interrogated me about the places where the KNLA were hiding, and I answered that I had not seen them. Then they punched my jaw once on each side and asked me to wait there. Later they said to each other that they would keep me to pressure me some more and would tie me up. Then they tied me up with rope. They tied my hands tightly behind my back and made me lay on my belly, then they interrogated me again. This time only one person was interrogating me. He asked me, "Isn't it true that you have guns and a radio?" I said, "No, I've never had those kinds of things." Then he told me, "Your education supervisor Kaw Mu surrendered to us with weapons, and he told us that you have guns and a radio." I answered to him, "No, that is not right. If you don't believe me then you can ask everybody in the village. This is all I have to say. When you ask everyone you will hear the truth." Then they tied me up for ten days and beat me badly until I had to sleep with blood all over my body every night. They punched my nose twice, and blood was running down from my nose. They beat my body as well. They punched me in the chest, left, right, left... They punched me in my head

and on my temples. Both of my shins were beaten with a big stick. They tied me up tightly, made me lay down and then beat me badly on both shins until both of my shins were completely bruised. That was the most painful thing I ever had to bear. Finally they told me that if my friends and I could show them just five bullets then they would surely set us free at once. We said, "There is no way we could show you that," and then they left us.

Later they came back and told us that they would kill us because we had broken their law. They told us that if we could find just one gun for them then they would set us free at once. We answered again that we could not find them anything like that. Then they said they would put us in jail if we could not find one. We were quiet because there was nothing we could say. During those ten days they never let the village headman or elders come to vouch for us. Even our relatives could only give us rice through their soldiers. The soldiers brought the rice to us and then took the plates back to our children or wives. After ten days they allowed the headman to vouch for us. First they called T— [the other villager being held] and untied him. They called him out for a while, then they came again and untied me and asked me to get up into the house there. They asked me, "Are you okay?" I said, "Yes, I am okay." Then they wrote on a piece of paper that they were setting us free under the assurances of the village headman. They asked the village headman to put his signature on it and then they set us free. We arrived home at night and my body was filthy. Then I saw my mother who had come and been waiting for me for four days already, worrying about me until she could not even sleep or eat. She was very happy to see me.

I saw that since I had been taken there [since his arrest] they were forcing the villagers to work harder and harder all the time. I knew it wasn't possible for me to stay, so I had to prepare to come here secretly. When I came, the problem was that I couldn't bring any food or belongings like cooking pots because I had to carry my children who are too small to run.

Q: Did you have any trouble when you arrived in Thailand?

A: The trouble when I arrived in Thailand was that we camped in one area and suddenly the Thai army came and camped right near us. A Thai army officer came to me and asked me, "Don't you think you should dig bunkers here?" I answered him, "If we need to dig them we'll dig them tomorrow." He told me that the DKBA or KPA may attack so we should be cautious. Then they went back to their place. We talked about it with each other in our huts until late, and then we slept. When we were sleeping at about 5:40 a.m. they fired their big gun at us. An M79 shell [grenade] fell on a hut and two people about 60 years old were injured. All the innocent people were shocked, ran out of the area and hid in fear. A newborn baby died because he fell to the ground while his mother was running with him. Then we heard the noisy sound of bullets [small arms] being fired. When the daylight came we found out that it was the Thai soldiers who were shooting at us. We looked all around our shelters and cleaned things up. After a while they came to see the place too. They asked the villagers, "Who was shooting at you last night?" The villagers told them that it was them who were shooting at us. Then the Thai soldiers were quiet and didn't say anything. [This is the shooting that occurred at Thay Pu Law Htwee on November 15, 1997.]

Shortly after that they asked the villagers to fix up a bridge which leads to Kwih Hta, so the villagers built up a log bridge. When we had finished building the bridge we

went home and ate our meal. After that the [Thai army] senior commander arrived at our place and called me and the other headmen. He told us to prepare our things and be ready in one hour to move to another place, which we would reach by passing through Kwih Lat Taw. I told the people to get ready, but some people were not obeying me and they asked me “Why are you doing this?” Then the Thai soldiers were angry with the people who wouldn’t obey. They forced them, they tied some of them up and hit some of them. After that they called the villagers together and told us to be quiet. They told the villagers, “Now all of you see these three people we have tied up because they were not obeying us. This will happen to people who do not obey us.” Then they kicked some people. Finally they called the headmen to come out in front and then ordered them to go in front of the people to lead them. So the villagers followed us.

The Thais guided us by car but we had to walk. We were walking along like that until noon, and by then we could see that the children were walking with difficulty and they seemed very tired. Some were crying sadly. The women were weeping miserably. We kept on going, then we took a rest for a while and then we kept on going again. When we reached the foot of the mountain near the place where they were going to keep us, the sun was already going down. We settled down there and started cooking some food to eat. Some people had not brought any food but others had, so we shared with each other what we had. By the time we finished cooking the children were crying because they were so hungry. After we fed them they went to sleep under the trees for the night because it was already late.

Q: When you arrived in Noh Po did you have any more problems?

A: There was no problem except that we could not build houses [the Thai authorities would not allow it]. Those of us who had no houses had to live in a barracks. [A long bamboo shelter with no walls, covered in plastic sheeting; the Thai authorities forced them to live like this for four to six months.] I think that now we will get a chance to build houses because one or two days ago they allowed us to go and get bamboo for flooring from Thay Pu Law Su. I believe that we will be able to build houses soon.

Q: Is it different here from life in your village?

A: It is a little different. When we stay here we receive good care and good food, we don’t need to do forced labor and we can help each other in whatever way we can. When we were in our village the SLORC Army persecuted us and forced us to do labor without any payment, we even needed to bring our own food. We have already decided to go back when there is peace in Burma, but we will never go back before there is change there.

Interview 36: Livelihood, Relocation

Name:	“Saw Kler”
Sex:	Male
Age:	20
Ethnicity:	Kayah
Religion:	Animist
Occupation	Farmer

Address: Mawchee town, southern Karenni State
Date of Interview: April 27, 1998
Source: KHRG

Q: What is the situation in Mawchi?

A: Mawchi is so poor that people have nothing to eat. Some villagers there may have money, but even if you have money you can't buy anything and you can't buy as much as you want. You can't get as much rice as you want to keep in your home. For example, you can't store enough rice in your home for one month, just for three days. You must keep the rest in the church and go to get some of it every three days. This is your own rice. They don't allow the villagers to keep all their belongings in their own homes, because they accuse the villagers of supporting the Karenni army and giving food to the Karenni army. Even in Mawchi. Mawchi is very big you know; I'm from Mawchi. There are many churches in Mawchi, and there is also a mine. If you are in Loikaw, the capital, you can buy rice and you can eat it there, but you can't bring rice from Rangoon to Mawchi [the SPDC won't allow it], you can't bring rice from Loikaw to Mawchi or to or from the areas to the east.

Q: Are the relocation sites still there, or have they been closed and moved to other places?

A: No, nothing like that. Shadaw and Ywathit [relocation sites] are still running but Ywathit is very small compared to Shadaw. Mawchi also stays. Right now there is no road construction right in Mawchi [town] but the people who live in the relocation sites like Shadaw or Mawchi are forced to work for the military every day. The situation of the people in the relocation sites is going from bad to worse because they said they have no food in the camp. They receive very little food from the SPDC and it is not enough for everybody. Some are starving to death. Many people die of sickness, especially in the rainy season from malaria and diarrhea. They are also forced to work for the military doing things like carrying water, cutting bamboo, making fences and collecting firewood for the army. Especially in the second district, the army goes to fight almost every week so the people are forced to carry their supplies and ammunition, and many people die as porters at the frontline. Now a lot of people who stay in the relocation sites are forced to be militia too, but not only people in the relocation sites have to do that. People from other villages are forced to do that too.

The road from Mawchi to Toungoo is 96 miles long. There was an old road there but they haven't used this road for many years now. So far they have done 12 miles from Mawchi. Villagers were forced to work there from six in the morning to five in the evening with only one hour break. About three months ago 11 women and 90 men were doing forced labor carrying things on the road 12 miles from Mawchi. They spent the night there and were attacked by the KNPP, and then they stopped work on the road [temporarily].

We refugees from Mawchi [those staying in the relocation site], as there was a especially the women, were afraid whenever we went to find vegetables in the forest of being threaten and raped by Burmese soldiers. We were sad and pitied our friends who had to face that. The villagers at Mawchi had to carry things for them as porters, both men and women, old and young. They beat the porters and threatened them. I felt very sorry for all of my villagers when I saw their situation like that.

They didn't give us enough rice. There was not enough water for all of us at Mawchi. Especially in the hot season we had to go very far to fetch water. Some people got diarrhea due to the unclean water. We received no health care. The Burmese who brought us there ought to have given us health care, but they never did that. There was a pharmacy but the villagers could not buy the medicines because they were very expensive. Some seriously ill people died because the cars [public transport using small trucks] only ran sometimes. If we saw a car we tried to send the seriously ill people to the hospital in town.

If you look at the shelters [in the relocation site] you can see that they are very small and not properly built, because it was not easy for the people to go and cut trees and bamboo. The Burmese who brought us there ought to supply us with water, food and health care, but they never took care of us. I hope the behavior of the Burmese will change soon. I hope they will give the people a chance to live freely and in peace.

Interview 37: Relocation, Livelihood, Forced Labor, refugee

Name:	"Koo Nga reh"
Sex:	Male
Age:	40+
Ethnicity:	Kayah
Religion:	Animist
Occupation	Farmer
Date of Interview:	April 28, 1998
Source:	KHRG

["Koo Nga Reh" is a KNPP official. The interview is included here because it presents a fairly broad picture of the current situation in Karenni.]

Q: Do you have any information about relocation sites?

A: I don't have much information from relocation sites such as Mawchi, Baw La Keh, Pah Saung, Ywathit, and Shadaw because now very few people there can contact us. All the relocation sites are controlled by the SPDC, so nobody can get into those places without their permission. The SPDC does not allow any NGO people [Non-governmental organizations, i.e. aid organizations] or even the church to provide any assistance to the people who are in the relocation sites. Since 1996, and especially since 1997, there have been very many people suffering from a shortage of food. They also suffer from malaria, diarrhea and other diseases. Since 1996, according to our annual report, about 300 people have died of various diseases in the relocation sites at Shadaw, Mawchi, and Ywathit.

At the moment there are five big relocation sites and five or six other relocation sites. In addition, since the beginning of this year they have been trying to relocate some villages down to the area they control around Loikaw. In many areas of the southern and eastern parts of the state there are no more people, because the SPDC has made a big offensive in that area so anyone they see in those areas is suspected and shot on sight with no questions asked.

Q: So are people also fleeing from fighting?

A: Yes, there is still fighting now, especially in those areas [the east and the south] because most of the people living in those areas are unwilling to move down to the relocation sites at Mawchi, Pah Saung and Baw La Keh. They don't go because they can stay hidden in the jungle along the Karen State - Karenni border, so they just move around there and avoid the SPDC troops. They're living in the jungle, they stay together with the Karenni Army there. But they've been doing that for almost two years now, so they have to face the problem of lack of food. I'm not sure about the next year; it depends on how long they can keep staying in that area by themselves without any support. They have no chance to cultivate crops, because SPDC troops are moving around in the area. All the villages are burned down now, including the churches, the schools, entire villages.

Q: Do they try to find the people who are hiding in the jungle?

A: Yes, they try, but they can't do it throughout the whole area, only in some parts of the area. Even so, some people who are hiding in the jungle will be found and killed by the SPDC troops. They call it a scorched earth operation. If they see anyone in the area, whether soldier or civilian, they shoot him dead with no questions asked. If they find people's rice, first they take whatever they can for themselves and then they burn whatever is left. Especially in the area between the Pon and Salween rivers. There are still around five hundred people hiding in that area, staying together with the Karenni troops there. They move around and try to find some food. All they can find is some of the food that families have left behind there, but there is no more food. They have no way to continue to survive there. Some try to flee to the [Thai] border but at the moment it is hard to travel because there are no boats to cross the rivers. Also, east of the Salween River all the way to the border there are so many SPDC troops, so the villagers are scared that they will be caught. Now then the SPDC army and the Thai businessmen are making logging deals, their troops travel to search for the logs in the forest, to know how many they have cut down already and how many are ready to sell.

They are trying to rebuild the old road from Mawchi to Toungoo, and onward into Burma. This old road was once used to transport the minerals from Mawchi, so they are trying to build it again now. They've ordered the people who are living in the relocation sites at Mawchi, Pah Saung, and Baw La Keh to go as volunteers to rebuild the road. There are also two other projects. One is building a new road from Baw La Keh to Daw Tama Gyi. That is a new road. Now all the people who live in that area have to be volunteers to build this new road. It is about 10 miles long. The other new project is near Loikaw; Ye Yaw village is 11/2 miles from the base of SPDC Battalion No. 269, so they are building a new road there. We just got this news a few days ago. Before there was only a path there so you had to walk, but now they are ordering all the local people around that area to build a main road for cars. There are many villagers in that area, so they will probably have about 1,000 people working on that road every day. It is just for the military to transport things; weapons, ammunition and rations. These kinds of roads just link villages to army bases, so the people have no use for them. No villagers use them.

Q: Have any of the villages in the northeast that weren't relocated previously now been moved?

A: In this area they started to relocate most people around the beginning of this year. They didn't do it in the past, only this year, because this year there has been a little more KNPP troop activity in this area. So they want to relocate the people down to the main road closer to their base, where they can supervise all the villagers more closely. Their base is at Nwa La Bo. They've deployed their troops to control the people, watch the people and see what they are doing. They have moved people to small relocation sites at Tee Say Ka, Nwa La Bo, Myeh Nee Kaw, Tee Plaw Ku and Pao Mai. There are three, four, or five villages together at these places. There are already villages there, but other villages have to move down [out of the hills] and stay there because these villages are close to the main road.

Q: How many relocation sites did you say there are in the whole state?

A: There are five big relocation sites and about six or seven small ones, but the small ones are difficult to count because they're always creating more of them to concentrate the villages more and more. But there are five big relocation sites: Mawchi, Pah Saung, Baw La Keh, Ywathit, and Shadaw. I think there are fewer people in Shadaw than there were at the beginning, because many people have tried to get permission to get out of the camp and have then managed to flee to the border. It is very hard to get information from inside the relocation sites. Most of the information we receive is from people who have escaped. Not many are escaping now. If people from outside try to go into the relocation camps they can if they are real villagers, but they must answer many questions: "Where are you from? Have you been here before? What are you doing, why have you come here? Do you know where the KNPP soldiers are, have you seen them?"

Q: Are the SPDC soldiers working alone or is the KNDA involved?

A: I think there is cooperation. The KNDA is together with them because their group was created by the SLORC. Many of them used to be KNPP soldiers, then they freely resigned from KNPP and returned to their homes, but the SLORC forced them to form a new group to attack the KNPP. That is the new strategy of the SLORC, just as they did in Karen areas [by creating the DKBA]. The KNDA is not so big, just 40 or 50 armed men. They also conscript villagers to be their troops. They always have to move together with SPDC troops because they have to be supervised by the SPDC, they cannot do anything without an order coming from the SPDC. Even if they want to do something themselves, they have to get permission from the SPDC commander before they can do it.

Q: What about the "people's army" [the SPDC militia force]?

A: This is different. All the villages have to form a militia and are forced to defend their village. Now the SPDC has a new strategy: whenever they want anything from the villagers they just force the militia to get it. If the SPDC commander comes to the village and gives orders to the headman then all the villagers know that the SPDC is demanding things; but this way, they form a militia and order it to do things for them so the villagers have to get it themselves, and then when the SPDC commander comes he says, "No, I'm not coming to your village to do that, that's your own people demanding it." This is their new strategy.

Q: Do they also use these militias to fight against the KNPP?

A: If necessary they may do that. They give them some kind of militia training. Then in

each village they only provide three to five guns, not so many, so the militia members have to take turns guarding their village. But if they think that the area is dangerous and that there are too many enemies around, they will provide more weapons and they will force the militia to be involved in fighting.

Q: Do the militia members get benefits like exemption from forced labor?

A: No, they have to do it, even they have to do forced labor. I think only the commander [the militia commander for the village] has to pay less or do less than the other villagers. Those village militias have to be formed with all the young men of the village; or else the young men have to join the KNDP. If you don't do either then you'll be sent away as a porter. So there are only three choices: would you like to join the militia forces, would you like to join the KNDP, or would you like to be a porter for the military? Which one would you like to choose?

Q: Is there still any area controlled by the KNPLF?

A: They just control a small area near Dee Maw So. Villagers living in this KNPLF area are safer than most others because now the KNPLF and the SPDC have a ceasefire agreement, so they don't do anything to those villagers. But others can't really flee to that area because most of the people there are Padaung [Kayan], and others can't really live among them because the language and the culture are very different. They also may not allow other people to come and live there among them.

Q: Is it still possible for new refugees to get into the refugee camps in Thailand?

A: At the end of last year the local authorities said that they would not allow any new arrivals, but just at the beginning of this year some new arrivals reached Camp 2. There were about 60 or 70 people. The Thais said nothing because those people couldn't stay any more in their home areas so they must allow them to come; if not, those people would starve to death. They came from the area between the Pon and Salween rivers. Some had been living in hiding and some had escaped from the Shadaw relocation site. The first group arrived in January and the second group arrived last month [in March]. They said that now it is quiet in Shadaw because fewer people are living there, but that they still have to work for the military every day and the military doesn't provide them with anything. The food situation there is very bad, the soldiers just provide a little rice for each family but never enough, so the families try to get some paid work outside the camp so they can buy some food to survive. But there's no business in those areas, it's only small villages, so they don't have a chance to make money and the local people can't help them. So it's very hard to get food.

Q: You said before that they [SPDC] are using convicts for forced labor; convicts from where?

A: Mostly from Loikaw prison because there are so many prisoners in Loikaw; some from central Burma, some from Shan State... They brought some prisoners from other prisons to Loikaw because they thought they might need to use them for military operations in the Karenni area. They use them for anything and everything. For everything they do they use the forced labor of everyone without payment, civilians as well as convicts. Even if they

have reserved a budget for a project they never use that budget for the project, they just use the local people. They never pay money for the work, you even have to bring your own food with you. They don't provide anything.

I don't know if things can change or not. Mainly the military are just trying to get more and more power and keep it longer, because they may be afraid that if they hand over power to the people then the people will send them to an international court. That would be dangerous for them, so that is why they are afraid to lose power, and that is why they keep trying to increase their power more and more.

Interview 38: Refugee, Forced Labor, Relocation

Name:	"Loong Kham"
Sex:	Male
Age:	43
Ethnicity:	Shan
Religion:	Buddhist
Occupation:	Farmer
Marital Status:	Married with four children
Address:	Gong Long village, Ho Murng township, Shan State
Date of Interview:	April 29, 1998
Source:	KHRG

["Loong Kham" farms rice and sesame in his village near Khun Sa's former headquarters at Ho Murng. He recently arrived in Thailand.]

Q: When did you arrive in Thailand?

A: I arrived on March 7. I came because of the oppression of the Burmese, like the others. I sent my wife and children first and then I fled. I had to do the same things as the others. There was more [forced] work in my place [than in "Sai Heng"'s village; see interview above]. You could see a lot of piles of stones along the road in Gong Long, a hundred and twenty piles of rocks along the road just for our village. There were more than 30 houses in the village, about 35 houses. We had iron rods to break the stones. One person from each house had to go. If we had no men, we had to replace them with women. Women and children had to go. They beat the people the same way they did in "Sai Heng"'s village because it was the same road, just a different section of it. The soldiers and their chiefs were watching us.

Q: When did you start to work on that road?

A: In the tenth month of 1997 [October/November by the Shan calendar]. In the tenth month it was still raining so we didn't have to work as much, we just had to work for about twenty days that month. It took us three months to finish that road [the section they had been assigned], until the twelfth month [December]. We had to finish it by then because they said that the road had to be finished completely by the end of the year. We had to work for them and follow the timetable that they gave us. If we didn't finish on time our village headman would be punished. We are all Shan and we didn't want to see anyone get hurt, so

we helped each other and in the end nobody had to be punished.

Q: Do you know where the road was going to?

A: The road that we built was going from our village to Ta Hung, to Sop Paeng, Tza Long and then on to Ho Murng. There was a lot of erosion because the streams were very strong. In Khun Sa's day they tried to repair that road, but now in the Burmese days there are no bulldozers or backhoes. Instead of that they use the villagers [Khun Sa used heavy equipment but the SPDC rarely does, preferring to use the cheaper option of forced labor]. They didn't build a dam on the river, so when the heavy rains come the water gets higher, the current is very strong and destroys the road along the river bank. We fixed that road for three months. This road is used by the forestry department [for logging], and the military use it to carry their supplies and their rations from Lang Kher.

Q: Did you have to do other work for the army?

A: Yes, we also did other things. When they wanted to build a school they tore down the houses of people who weren't around; some people had gone to Thailand or other places, and some had gone away to earn money. We had to tear the houses down for them and carry the building materials to their camp. If we hadn't done it we would have been beaten.

Q: Was anybody forced to move by the army in your area?

A: They didn't force us to move in that area because our village is close to the road, they come and stop there when they transport their rations. They were [Light Infantry] Battalion No. 525 from Pan Taw Wet. There were some people who fled the village but they didn't come here [to Thailand], they just went to Ho Murng. A big crowd of us came here - myself, L—, N—, K—, and also P—, S—, N—, P—, L—, another one we call Teacher, and T—; altogether 11 families, and also W—, all from the same village. Some others are in other places in Thailand. Some young people have fled to Thailand while their parents stayed behind.

Q: How did you come here?

A: We walked through the jungle for two days. We just hid from the soldiers and walked through the jungle, but if we had met the soldiers they wouldn't have allowed us to come. We couldn't carry any bags, not even any rice, otherwise we would have been accused of providing rice to the rebels. For the same reason we couldn't carry any dried noodles or cheroots. But we didn't even know where the rebels were. We've never seen any rebels, we've just heard about them.

We came as a group to Pang Yon [in Thailand], then we tried to bring some of our relatives who were left behind in Nam Kut and Kai Lon. Some people from Mai Kai tried to do the same, but the Burmese found out and blocked the way. In the end those people couldn't come, though their children are all here already. In Pang Yon we found day labor to survive. With what we earned for one day we could survive that one day, but we were short of food.

Q: Is it true that the Burmese army came to see you when you were in Pang Yon?

A: They did, even just two days ago on the 27 [of April] they came and fired their guns

over on the other side of Pang Yon, which is still Thai territory, and also at Long Juk which is close to the Thai border. They even came and camped in Mai Kai Long, which is Thai territory, and they kept in contact by radio [with their base]. So then the Thai Army also went and visited there. The Thais camped at Hong Yarm, and they also went to Mai Kai Long because it is very close by. Both the Burmese and the Thais go up there [Mai Kai Long] quite often.

Q: Do you think more people are going to try to come to Thailand?

A: If the villagers can find a way to come they will come. They can't stay there any more because of the oppression by the Burmese army. They are treating the villagers harder and harder all the time. In the beginning when the [SLORC/SPDC] soldiers first arrived they didn't dare force the villagers to do things because there were too many of us, but as the number of villagers gets fewer and fewer they treat them harder and harder, just like keeping hens in a cage, and people can't find a way out. [As the population gets lower the demands for forced labor, food and money remain at least the same, so each villager faces a heavier burden.] Under the present situation I don't want to go back because we won't be able to survive. Even now the situation there is very hard.

Interview: 39: Relocation, Forced Labor, Women, Child, Livelihood

Name:	"Sai Heng"
Sex:	Male
Age:	30
Ethnicity:	Shan
Religion:	Buddhist
Occupation:	Farmer
Marital Status:	Married with two children
Address:	Nong Yao village, Ho Murng township, Shan State
Date of Interview:	April 29, 1998
Source:	KHRG

["Sai Heng" farmed rice and sesame in his village near Khun Sa's former headquarters at Ho Murng. He recently fled to Thailand.]

Q: Where are you from?

A: We are originally from Nong Yao village close to Ho Murng, then we moved to Pang Yon [a place in Thailand where many new Shan refugees took temporary refuge]. We arrived at Pang Yon the second week of the fourth month [in March by the Shan calendar] and we stayed there more than 20 days. Sorry I don't remember exactly, but we fled our village after the celebration of Union Day [February 12]. Nong Yao is two hours' walk from Ho Murng, north of Ho Murng. There is a road to get to the village but the road is quite old.

Q: Why did you flee from your village?

A: Because we were oppressed by the Burmese soldiers. We could not live there any

longer. That is why we moved. And I want to tell you how they oppressed us. Very often they forced us to carry stones to pave the road, so we didn't have time to earn our own living. We didn't have any chance to work on our farms because they were forcing us to carry rocks all the time. We couldn't stand it any more so we had to escape from that situation. When we refused to go [to forced labor] we were tied and beaten. Even our village headman was seized and beaten. That is why we could not stay at all, and finally the village became empty. Nobody dared to stay. Besides, all our chickens, cooking oil, rice, our pigs, our chilies, even our pots and dishes, whatever they [SPDC soldiers] saw they took away by force. They ate our food and our livestock, and even though we begged them not to do it, they just tied up the owners and then killed their cattle, pigs and chickens. Then they ate them while they drank alcohol. Even worse, even after we had nothing left to give them we were supposed to go and buy things from other villages to give to them. When we went to the other villages to buy the things that they asked for, sometimes the house owner was not there and the neighbors said, "Oh, the owner of this house is not here, he went to the jungle to become a revolutionary." Then when we went back and told the soldiers that the person wasn't there, they went and broke open the lock and took all the house owner's belongings.

Q: What kind of labor did you have to do?

A: Mainly carrying rocks to build the road. We could make only two trips in one whole day. They forced us to work on the road from Ho Murng to Nam Lin to Pang Kong [at the bank of the Salween River] to Tai Yoi Mu. This road goes towards to Lang Kher. The other roads [on which people have to work] go from Ho Murng to Mai Kai and from Ho Murng to Hok. Even when the villagers had to work on those roads they [the SPDC officers] would ask for a budget from their headquarters and they would keep that money only for themselves.

Q: In your village, how many people had to do this work each day?

A: More than 30, one person from each house had to go to work for them every day. If we only had two or three people in the house and we couldn't go to work for them, we had to give them money, a hundred *Kyat* a day. If we didn't have any money, we had to give them alcohol or chickens instead. If we had no chickens we had to give them beef, not the whole cow, but we had to kill a cow and give them some of the beef [this is a serious burden on a family because cattle are a major form of savings - once killed the meat must be used quickly or dried, as people have no access to refrigeration].

Q: Did the SLORC give you any food while you were working?

A: How could they feed us? They even stole the rice we brought with us! We had to bring our own lunch with us and then they took and ate our lunch. So we were hungry, we missed our lunch, and when that made us feel exhausted they beat us! Sometimes instead of stealing our rice they exchanged our good sticky-rice with their Burmese rice, saying that it was sticky rice but it was not. The soldiers wanted to have the villagers' sticky rice. Some stole the sticky rice from the villagers and then the people who had no rice became weak and they got beaten by the Burmese — and the Burmese said, "Oh, you are very lazy." If someone was working slowly he got beaten, because the soldiers were guarding us; but no

one died. Women and children were working there also. They preferred men but, if there were no men the women were obliged to go. If there were no adults, then children had to go. When the parents got sick the children had to go for them. They were teenagers, fourteen and older. The youngest children had to carry half of what the adults carried.

Q: Did the army come to your village very often?

A: They came and camped in the village for a few days, then they went and camped for a while in every village around there. In Nam Kuyt they caused problems. There were three women who were on their way to buy things to eat in Ho Murng, and they met some Burmese troops in Nong Laeng. The soldiers said "Come, we have rice", and they made the three women go into their camp, and then they raped those three women. After that they gave them one pyi of rice each [about 2 kg/4.4 lb] and they said "You don't have to pay for this rice." They were from Nam Kuyt, not our village. I don't know the names of the women, they were Pa'O and we live five miles away from them.

Q: What about the other villages around?

A: The other villages also had the same problems as we did. The first village is Lon Yao, the second is Ho Kit, the third is Nong Ai, the fourth Myo Yat, and the fifth Mayk HOUNG; all of these villages are totally empty now because they [the soldiers] did as I have explained. They started emptying two months ago. They treated us badly and we could not stand this kind of oppression. Whenever we couldn't give them what they asked for we were supposed to give them money.

When the soldiers realized that we had all moved to the Thai border they sent someone to tell us, "Come back, all of you come back, come and work in your opium fields again. When you grow it we will buy all that you produce, and we will pay you the same price that you could get from others." That is what they said. They were three battalions, LIB 525, LIB 332 and IB 99 from Murng Pan and Lang Kher. We answered, "No, we don't want to come back." We didn't even farm opium before. I farmed rice and sesame. We told them that we didn't want to farm opium and that we wouldn't go back.

Q: Isn't it forbidden to cultivate opium?

A: When the Burmese soldiers arrived in that area [in 1996, after Khun Sa's surrender] it was full of people, but later there were fewer and fewer people because of their oppression. They didn't like that [the army needs villagers for forced labor and as a source of loot and extortion money]. They tried to find out why the villagers left their villages. They were wondering, "Why did people leave after we arrived?" So finally they tried to make us go back home by telling us that if we did, we would be allowed to cultivate opium. They said, "If you farm opium you will earn good money, you will have money and gold, you will do good business. If you don't know where to sell it we will buy it, but we'll collect a tax."

Look, when Khun Sa was there it was said that Khun Sa was an opium warlord but we never saw this kind of thing happening around our village. But now, since Khun Sa surrendered, the price of Ya Ba has gone down to 10 baht per tablet ['crazy medicine', known in Burmese as 'myin say'; an amphetamine-type drug that makes you aggressive and stupid, common in Burma and Thailand], and the Burmese soldiers carry their opium and their Ya Ma along with them from place to place. They even come and sell it in

Thailand, in Mai Kai On and Mai Kai Long villages. Before I'd never even heard about these kinds of things, but now I've seen them myself.

Q: Do you know if there is a place where they produce Ya Ba in your area?

A: Only the Burmese [soldiers] produce Ya Ba and it is forbidden to go to the factories where they make it. It is forbidden and the places are guarded by soldiers. They make the Ya Ma outside the villages. In our area the man who transports the opium drives a 4-wheel drive truck [small pickup truck]. No matter what checkpoints he has to pass he is never checked, and he has all kinds of equipment for transforming opium [into heroin] in his 4-wheel drive truck. He is an operations commander ['byu ha mu'; strategic commander]. He buys the raw opium with gold, he buys one and a half viss [2.4 kg/5.2 lb; i.e. he buys about this much on each trip]. I don't know his name but he is from that same regional command, from Lang Kher. Now he's already moved, but the other units also do it the same way. Now only the Burmese do that business, the Shan and Pa-O don't do it. In Ho Mung there is a lot of Ya Ba, plenty! The sellers and the buyers are both Burmese. The Burmese soldiers just put on their mufti [civilian clothes] and then they sell the stuff from village to village as far as Mai Kai Long [in Thailand]. They go there not only to sell Ya Ma, they sell opium as well. They sold what they seized from the opium merchants after Khun Sa surrendered. After that they made their own fields at Gong Sarng and Gong Mai Houg and they forced the villagers there to work for them.

Q: Would you say that there are more opium fields now than before Khun Sa surrendered?

A: In Khun Sa days people were talking all the time about opium, but I had never seen it. I didn't even know what it looked like. But now, since the Burmese came to rule the area we've had the chance to see what opium, Ya Ba, and also heroin are. But we don't buy it, we don't use it. We just saw it when they came to deal in it. Before when Khun Sa was there, we just heard people mention opium and we saw opium in pictures, as though it were some kind of vegetable. [Khun Sa bought most of his opium from other areas before refining it into heroin; see the interview below with "Sai Long", who was arrested while transporting opium into Khun Sa's area.]

Q: Is the situation getting worse this year? Why did you decide to flee only now?

A: In Khun Sa's days, before he surrendered to the Burmese troops, we didn't have to be porters, we didn't have to pay money to the soldiers and we were not forced to work for them; but after the Burmese soldiers started ruling our area life only remained peaceful for about three months. After that, the situation started getting worse and worse until the land became empty [of people].

Q: Didn't you flee because of fighting between the SPDC and the SSA?

A: No. I think if the Burmese soldiers stay there I won't go back to my home, but when we achieve freedom I will go back. When we are living in Thailand we can't cut trees in the forest like at home [to build a house], and it is hard to survive. At home we can farm and cultivate, we can conduct small businesses there, but here we don't see anything we can do, so when the Burmese have gone we would love to go back. If it is not possible to go back we don't have any idea what we'll do.

Interview 40: Refugee, Relocation, Livelihood, Women, Child

Name: "Klaw Reh"
 Sex: Male
 Age: 50
 Ethnicity: Kayah
 Religion: Animist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Marital Status: Widower, nine children but six of them already dead
 Address: Daw Kraw Aw village, Shadaw township, Karenni State
 Date of Interview: April 29, 1998
 Source: KHRG

[*"Klaw Reh" was interviewed in a refugee camp in Thailand.*]

Q: When did you arrive here?

A: I don't know the date, but since then we've been given rice two times (i.e. he has been there one or two months). We came because the SLORC burned all our houses and our barns and they killed all our animals. We didn't have any house so we couldn't stay anywhere. We had no food and we didn't want to die. I am too old, I can't resist the SLORC.

Q: When and how was your village ordered to move?

A: June 1996 - they sent a letter. When we arrived there [at Shadaw relocation site] they just gave us very little food and the rice was not good. We had to work for them two or three times a week, for the whole day each time. We couldn't enjoy our food [i.e. they did not have enough and they were too tired and depressed to enjoy the bad food they had]. We saw a lot of people dying when we stayed in the relocation site. We couldn't bear it, that is why we escaped from there; but not all of us, only some. Some still stay in the relocation site.

Q: Was there a clinic in Shadaw?

A: Yes, but they didn't treat us very well. I saw a woman there who died when her baby was only six days old. They would inject one ampoule of medicine into two or three people. We didn't need to pay money for the injection, but if we paid money we could go to the medic's house and be properly treated.

Q: How long did you stay in Shadaw?

A: Two months. I stayed there but we didn't have enough food, and then the Burmese told us to go back to our village to bring back some food. When we went back to our old village we never tried to go back to the relocation place, we just tried to hide in the forest. The Burmese called the people who escaped to come back to the relocation site, but after we escaped we didn't want to go back. When we were hiding there, if the Burmese ever saw some smoke (from a cooking fire) they fired mortar shells at it. I was afraid because I saw many people killed by the Burmese, and we were afraid we would also be killed. We didn't have enough food to resist them.

I decided that if I died everything would be over and that would be better than going back, because life is very bad in the relocation site. We didn't have any chance to work for ourselves, we just worked for the Burmese. Then the Burmese sent a letter again to the people who had escaped, calling us back to the relocation site.

When we stayed [in hiding] in our village, SLORC soldiers came and when they found villagers they shot at them. We posted people as sentries, so when the SLORC were coming we always ran out of the village. We saw people shot at by the Burmese, but they didn't die because we knew they were coming. They look on the villagers as Karenni soldiers so they just kill them. They killed many people. We were really lucky to survive this long. I'm very, very lucky. If I was not lucky I would have been killed.

Q: How did you survive in the forest?

A: The village was already burned down [by the time they returned from Shadaw]; trees, bamboo and grass had already grown in the village. We had some food because we had hidden it in the forest or in caves, but it took one or two hours to go and find the food. They had burned all our houses and our barns, so if we hadn't hidden our food it would have been very difficult. Just then my wife died, leaving me with our small eight months old baby. I didn't have any milk to give to my baby. I just gave him water. If I had stayed there longer we would have died, so we fled from there.

Q: Did the people get sick while they were hiding?

A: How could they avoid falling sick? And we couldn't go anywhere to find medicine. But only my wife died. She died of diarrhea. Her name was Pru Meh. When we lived in Shadaw it was worse - at least one person in each family died of disease there.

Q: How many people were hiding with you?

A: People from Daw Ei Po, Daw Leh Da, and Daw Ei She, those three villages, but divided into groups of three families in three different places. There were about 15 or 16 people. There were also a single blind woman and a very old woman left behind there (when they fled to Thailand). There were also four families near D— village and two families near A—. In D— one family had seven people but one of them died. He didn't have any sickness, but when we arrived from Shadaw he just died.

Q: Did you see soldiers when you were hiding?

A: Yes, we saw them, but only from a distance. We came out from the places where we were hiding and watched them. We always watched when they were around because if we saw them coming our way then we'd have to run away from the place where we were hiding. When they found out where we were hiding we had to move, then when they found out our new place we had to move again. We had to move at least four or five times. But they didn't find us, because if they had found us they would have killed us. The Burmese patrolled around Daw Tama and Daw Bo Loh. They never made camps, they just came for a while and left. They came patrolling once a week, every week. I think they were Battalions 72 and 54, but I'm not sure. They were the soldiers who guard the Lawpita Dam [near Loikaw]. No. 72 is based in Lawpita and No. 54 in Loikaw.

Q: How long did it take you to come here [to the refugee camp]?

A: Six days, because we had to avoid the army, but if we could have come directly it would have been four days. It is very difficult to come here because Burmese soldiers block the border, but we had to try to pass. I came with a lot of people - one family from Daw Kraw Aw and two families from Daw Leh Da. If someone is lucky he can pass, if he is not he will die. I was afraid, very afraid that we would be killed. While I was coming here my mind was right outside of my body [an expression for extreme fear]. But we were lucky and we didn't die.

Q: Do you think one day you will be able to go back?

A: Yes, of course we would like to go back. Now we get rice from others, but we only receive it once a month so if they stop giving it what will we do? If we stayed on our own land we could plant and grow enough food for ourselves for the whole year.

Q: After you left Shadaw relocation site did you hear anything about the situation there?

A: At the beginning they were given rice there, but later they didn't get enough rice so they had to work. For one day's work they can get eight milk-tins of rice [about 2 kg/3 lb] and 14 *kyat*. If a family has more than five people this is not enough to eat for a day, so the people who still live in that place have to steal whatever they can find to eat, and this is a problem.

Interview 41: Relocation, Forced Labor, Women, Child, Killing

1. Name:	“Naw Wah”	2. Name:	“Baw Reh”
Sex:	Female	Sex:	Male
Age:	40	Age:	47
Ethnicity:	Kayah	Ethnicity:	Kayah
Religion:	Christian	Religion:	Animist
Occupation	Farmer	Occupation	Farmer

Marital Status: Married with seven children
Address: Daw Kraw Aw village, Shadaw township, Karenni State
Date of Interview: April 29, 1998
Source: KHRG

[“Baw Reh” was interviewed in a refugee camp in Thailand. He used to be headman of his village.]

Q: Why did you come here?

A: The Burmese forced us to move to Shadaw at the same time as the others [in mid-1996]. The Burmese soldiers sent a letter saying that we had just seven days to move to the relocation place. First they sent the letter, then they sent a man to the village to order us to go to Shadaw within four or five days. He said, “You must go to the relocation site in time, you can’t stay in your village after that date. If you stay after the date the soldiers will come to shoot you and kill you.” We were very afraid so we went there, but some old people still

remained in the village.

Q: How many people from your village moved to Shadaw?

A: There were 105 households in my village. At first 60 households moved to Shadaw and some moved to Thailand. Some of our old people couldn't move, and some families were split because the people who could travel came here [to a refugee camp] and those who couldn't travel so well went to the relocation place.

Q: How long did you stay in Shadaw?

A: At first I stayed just over two weeks, I couldn't stay any longer because I couldn't get anything to live. I'd just brought two baskets of rice, and that was for my whole family. Then the man said, "You have to bring your belongings." So we went back again and again [to the village] to fetch our things. They allowed only seven days for that; they said that if we took more than seven days they would shoot us, but we couldn't bring everything in seven days. I called my family, and my whole family came and lived in Shadaw for more than a month. When we stayed in the relocation site many people got sick. I stayed with my family for about 20 days, and after that I escaped without permission and went back to our village to search for some food I could take to my family. I escaped alone; almost all the men left before their families. My family was still staying in Shadaw. I was in our village for four or five days, and if I'd stayed much longer than that they would have killed me. The Burmese soldiers said if you stayed away more than a week they would shoot you. Then they really did come and shoot at people in Daw Hi So and Doi Saw villages [while they were still getting things in the village]. Some people could escape but others couldn't, and we couldn't escape so we just hid around there. We ran from our village and hid in the forest. We ran and lived in our farmfield hut.

Then I went back to Shadaw and found that all my children and my wife were sick. Life was very hard there, especially for the small children, so we left. By then it was more and more dangerous to go back to our old village, so I took them all with me and we hid under the trees with five or six other families. We hid in the forest for four months.

Q: Did you have to work for the army in Shadaw?

A: I did not live in Shadaw for a long time so I wasn't forced to work, but the others were forced to work a lot. I just went back to my village so I didn't work for them. My family didn't have enough food because we had left most of it behind. I didn't find any food in Shadaw, I just tried to get some from where we had hidden it before. Even my house materials and belongings were left behind in the village. In my village I left a lot of livestock and other things as well. When I escaped it was without permission. The Burmese soldiers didn't stop us from going out because they could not feed the people any more, so we went in and out. I went to my village but there were no people there any more, and then I just lived in hiding outside the village. I don't have any education, so it was difficult for me to know what to do for our future.

Q: How did you come here?

A: We hid in the forest for a long time. The old men said that we would die of mosquito bites and disease. There were no medicines, and some died. Some could walk but some

could not, they just hid in the forest. It is difficult to live hidden in the forest. Then we left; the people who could walk went first and waited in front while the people who could not walk tried to follow. I tried to find some soldiers to guide us, and eventually along the way we found some Karenni soldiers in a field. When we met them we asked them to guide us along the way.

That was during the tenth month [October 1996], and the Burmese soldiers shot at us while we were escaping. That was when Si Reh and Ei Reh [both men] were shot dead. We were escaping together with them. I think four people died at that time, two villagers and two Karenni soldiers. They died because they went on ahead. Another villager was wounded and we carried him. Those who were killed were Si Reh, he was from Daw Kraw Aw, and Ei Reh from Daw Bo Loh. One of the soldiers killed was Mi Reh from Daw Kraw Aw. I don't know the name of the other one. He was from Brigade 2, Column 1. The man who was wounded was Pleh Law, from Daw So Kyar.

Interview: 42: Arrest, Forced Labor, Torture, Refugee

Name:	"Sai Long"
Sex:	Male
Age:	30
Ethnicity:	Shan
Religion:	Buddhist
Occupation	Farmer
Marital Status:	Married with three children
Address:	xxxx village, Loikaw township, Karenni State
Date of Interview:	May 1, 1998
Source:	KHRG

["Sai Long" was arrested in 1994 for carrying opium and sentenced to 10 years. While serving his sentence in Loikaw jail, he was taken as a porter early this year for SPDC troops patrolling Karenni areas and eventually escaped.]

Q: When did you arrive here [a refugee camp]?

A: I arrived here on April 5. I came here because the SPDC forced me to be a porter. First I was a prisoner in Loikaw jail, then they took me out of jail and forced me to be a porter.

Q: Why were you in jail?

A: I went to prison because of drugs. I didn't want to carry opium and I never used it, but I had to think of how I could earn a living. I was given money to carry opium. A Chinese paid me 500 *kyat* for each piece, and I carried eight pieces. I have no idea where it came from. I carried it from Lwae Neh to Mae Aw, then from Mae Aw to Ho Murng. They didn't sell it in Karenni State, they were selling it to Khun Sa and they transported it there [Ho Murng was Khun Sa's headquarters]. I was arrested on April 9, 1994 by LIB 530 because I hadn't paid them any money. If you pay them money they don't arrest you. [The SLORC/SPDC charges a tax on those who independently produce or transport opium and heroin, and if you do not pay it you are arrested.] I think you have to pay at least a 100,000 *kyat*, but

the amount depends on how many pieces you have. The more you carry, the more you have to pay them. They arrested four people. I had a trial. I got a 10 years sentence and I stayed for four years of it. At first I had to stay in shackles for one and a half year. My serial number there was xxxx.

Q: How was the life in jail?

A: They gave us one mess-tin-lid of rice to eat twice a day. We had enough water to drink but we could only take a bath once every five or six days. Some of the rooms we stayed in were big and some were small. Sixty or seventy people were staying in each small room. A room for sixty was the same size as this room [about 3x6 yards] so we had to sleep on our side [all pressed together side by side]. We went outside every day for one or two hours. We had to go to the fields to grow vegetables for the jailers. We didn't get to eat those vegetables though, and they beat some prisoners for trying to steal vegetables. U Mya Thein was in charge of the prison.

Q: What about diseases?

A: There were many kinds of disease. Some had fever, some had skin disease, some dysentery and some diarrhea. Some prisoners had money and when they were sick they bought themselves medicine and took it. If people had no money they stayed sick, they couldn't get medicine. I saw people die. I don't remember how many people died, but it was more than twenty during these four years. They died because they had fever, diarrhea and dysentery. I don't remember their names, most of them were old men. One of them was in for stealing a bicycle.

Q: When you stayed in prison were there any women prisoners?

A: Yes, there were 30 women. The men had enough problems [in jail], and the women had even more problems. There were also children in jail. Many, many children were in the women's jail. Some were born in jail and some were brought as prisoners. Two children were born in the jail, even though there is no hospital in Loikaw jail.

Q: How did you become a porter?

A: They forced me to become a porter. I had to be a porter for eight days. First we went to Shadaw by car. At first I had to carry big shells. The length was like this and the diameter was like that [he indicated 81mm shells, which weigh 3 to 4 kg / 7 to 10 pounds each]. I also had to carry rice and bullets. It was very heavy. The soldiers didn't even carry their own [personal] bags, we had to carry them. They carried only guns and equipment. There were thirty prisoners carrying things but no villagers. In my group there were no women but I saw older people, three or four people who were 40 or 45 years old. I also saw young people, fifteen or sixteen years old. The soldiers were from No. 250 [Battalion, based in Loikaw] and LIB 421 [based in Shan State]. There were over one hundred soldiers from each battalion. Our group had thirty porters for over one hundred soldiers, but I don't know how many porters the other group had. They didn't give us even one coin for that. We didn't even get enough food. We got just a few handfuls of rice, the same as in prison. We didn't have enough water, we had to find whatever water we could and we couldn't ever take a bath.

Q: Did the soldiers beat anybody?

A: Yes, but they didn't beat me, they beat Aik Htun. He was 25 years old and he was a prisoner. He was beaten by a three-star captain from battalion No. 250 because he couldn't climb the mountain. Actually he could climb the mountain, but the soldiers followed him and beat him from behind because he could not carry things quickly enough. They beat him on the back and on the head with a bamboo stick. He was wounded and bleeding a lot. I tried to help him for one day [before he ran away himself]. They forced him to carry things again but he could not carry anything any more, and when he couldn't carry the soldiers beat him again. When we fled he wasn't dead yet but maybe he died after that. They also beat another man, Saw Ee. They beat him on his back because he couldn't carry any more, because he didn't get enough food and he was sick.

Q: When you were carrying for the army did you see any villagers?

A: No, there were no villagers left and I didn't see any fighting.

Q: How did you escape?

A: We fled down the hillside when they [the soldiers] were a little bit far from me. Two of us fled together, but the others didn't come here with me. It took me over one month to come here. We stayed on the hillsides with the Karenni [soldiers]. They treated us with medicines because I got malaria the day that we fled, that night when we were sleeping [on the bare ground with no blanket].

Q: What do you hope for now?

A: I will work, any kind of work. But I want to go back and see my children. I have three children; the eldest was five in 1994, and the youngest wasn't even one year old at that time [he hasn't seen them since his arrest].

Interview 43: Relocation, Livelihood, Forced Labor, Refugee

Name:	"Nyi Reh"
Sex:	Male
Age:	26
Ethnicity:	Kayah
Religion:	Christian
Occupation:	Farmer
Marital Status:	Married with two children, aged 1 and 3
Address:	Daw Leh Da village, Loikaw township, Karenni State
Date of Interview:	May 6, 1998
Source:	KHRG

[*"Nyi Reh" lived in Nwa La Bo relocation site north of Loikaw for almost two years before fleeing to the Thai border, where he arrived at the beginning of April 1998.*]

Q: Why did you come here?

A: The SLORC army ordered my village to relocate so I left my village two years ago. I

stayed for two years in Nwa La Bo consolidation village [relocation site], Loikaw township. Then I fled from there together with a friend.

Q: How many houses are there at Nwa La Bo?

A: There are about 130 houses in Nwa La Bo. Ten villages were relocated there; including Thirida, Daw Mu Leh, Daw Leh Da, Daw Sar Si, Daw Klay, Ku Lay and Daw Lar Leh villages. [Villages in this area were not forced to relocate in the initial relocations because they were spared by a SLORC agreement with the KNPLF ceasefire group; however, SLORC subsequently cancelled the agreement and relocated them anyway.] They didn't give enough food to the villagers. Before they gave one pyi [about 2 kg of rice] each and we could eat it for three days. Then they gave one pyi a week for one person. They gave a bit of salt but they didn't give oil, beans or soap. They gave only rice and salt. But they gave us a chance to find some more rice - they would let us farm outside the camp, but we had to pay for a ticket to get out. Each ticket cost 50 *kyat*. Then if they heard any strange news, for example, news that the rebels were close by, they wouldn't allow us out. So we couldn't go out to the fields and the paddy crop was destroyed. We could buy rice but it was very expensive: 100 *kyat* for one pyi. At first they had checkpoints but not any longer, and they never built a fence around the camp, so it was actually easy to go out and come in.

Q: Was there a hospital there?

A: They had a hospital but if you didn't give them money they wouldn't treat you. Some people died because they wouldn't treat them. In two years I saw three patients die, one old man and two children. They got sick and they died.

Q: Did you have a chance to worship in Nwa La Bo?

A: They built a Buddhist monastery but they didn't give permission to build a Christian church so we couldn't build one, and the Christians had no chance to worship [many Karenni are Roman Catholic]. The army also destroyed the Christian church in my village because of the [local SLORC] chairman Hla Win. Now he is not chairman any more, he joined the Military Intelligence. But they do have a school in Nwa La Bo.

Q: Did you have to do any work for the SPDC?

A: Sometimes they made us do forced labor in the Army plantation between Nwa La Bo village and Chet Kae village, over one hour's walk away. Infantry Battalion No. 54 came and took us on trucks. They forced us to carry things, dig the earth and do other things. They forced us to work like that three or four times a month. The soldiers said that they were planting vegetables for the refugees [the people in the relocation sites] but we never got any of them.

Q: Did they arrest [SLORC] soldiers who ran away?

A: Yes, they arrested their soldiers who escaped, but they didn't arrest those who left the KNPP as long as they joined the KNDA, the ones with the dragon badges. They forced them [the ex-KNPP soldiers] as well as villagers to become KNDA. If the villagers obeyed and became KNDA they didn't arrest them, but if they wouldn't become KNDA they arrested them and sent them to prison. [SLORC/SPDC demands some kind of quota of KNDA

recruits from among the villagers.] I joined the KNDA because they came and forced me to become KNDA. If my father had been staying with us I wouldn't have gone [one man from their house had to go, so his father would have gone]. But only my mother and my sister were staying in our house, so I had to go because I was afraid. When I stayed with the KNDA I didn't do anything for them. I just stayed in the Army camp beside Daw Leh Ku village, between Tee Ku Leh and Daw Leh Ku. They gave me an AK [AK47 assault rifle], and I had to carry that. Before I went there I'd heard that there were four hundred soldiers in the KNDA, but when I arrived there I saw only a hundred. The Burmese control them completely. Wherever they go the Burmese follow them.

Q: How did you flee from Nwa La Bo?

A: I fled Nwa La Bo at night, I don't know what time it was. I fled suddenly, and my wife and children didn't come with me. I fled with one friend. I fled to D—, then to K— and then across to this place. It took me less than one month to come here, sixteen or seventeen days. I saw them [SPDC soldiers], but I ran away when I saw them. They didn't catch us and they didn't shoot at me.

Q: What is the difference between Nwa La Bo camp and the refugee camp?

A: In Loikaw, at Nwa La Bo, they didn't give enough rice, but in the refugee camp we get rice, oil, salt, chilies, beans, blankets, mosquito nets, mats, and treatment for sick people. So now I will stay here and work. My wife and my two children will arrive soon. They will arrive here with other people from Nwa La Bo. I will build a house and stay with my family. I don't want to go back to Loikaw, I will stay here.

Interview 44: Religion, Relocation

Name:	Ashin Wanna Thiri
Age:	23 (2-year-monkhood)
Address:	Hway Yo Monastery, Pin Lon township, Shan State
Date of Interview:	May 22, 1998
Place of Interview:	Thai-Burma border
Source:	ABYMU

My name is Ashin Wanna Thiri and I have had two years in monkhood. I was from Hway Yo monastery, Pin Lon township Shan State. On March 2, 1998, my monastery was destroyed by the SPDC troop. On that day, troops from LIB 517 based in Mai Pun township, Shan State arrived to my village. They were led by Captain Aye Ko. First they told the villagers to move from the village and that the village would be destroyed. The villagers cried and pleaded not to be moved. The soldiers said it was an order given from their superior and they must obey the order assigned to them. The soldiers also told that the monastery must be destroyed too. There were about 20 monks residing at the monastery at that time. The soldiers were so rude and they did not listen to our request. They allegedly accused us of having contact with the ethnic armed group, working political activities and giving support to the armed groups. Actually, no one from the village had any contact with the armed group as their base was far from our village.

The village has had experience of human rights abuses by the SPDC troops for a long time. The soldiers from SPDC looted the belongings of the villagers, forced the villagers to do unpaid jobs and demanded money from the villagers whenever they came to the village. People never like them due to their abuses against the civilians, but no one dare speak out how they feel.

Let me return to the event of forcible removal of our village. When the villagers did not obey the order to destroy the village, the soldiers used very rude words and beat the villagers. About 30 villagers were beaten for not obeying the order. Then the soldiers began destroying the whole village. At last, the villagers had to collect their personal belongings from the houses while the soldiers were destroying. I can still remember the event now. It was like a hell and doomsday of the universe. People were running around and crying. Finally the whole village was destroyed and burnt down. The soldiers also looted whatever they wanted from the escaping villagers.

Our village was not the only village ordered to move. There were other villages faced the same situation. I know some name: Wan tai village and Kon Pat village. All had to run away. Our monk also had to move out from the villages.

We had no idea where to settle down after our whole village was destroyed. Some moved to the nearby town, some hid in the jungle and some fled to Thai-Burma border. I decided to go along with other people who were heading for the Thai border. It took for me six days on foot to get here. There were other five monks with me. Because it was during the rainy season, the route was very difficult to take. We had to cross many streams including the Salween River.

Interview 45: Child, Torture, Refugee

Name:	Withheld
Age:	15
Ethnicity:	Burman
Religion:	Buddhist
Education:	Second Standard
Address:	North Okkalapa, Rangoon
Date of joining the army:	1998
Rank:	Private
Date of desertion:	November 14, 1998 at Htaw Ma Pyo, near Ratchaburi Province, Thailand
Date of Interview:	November 27, 1998
Source:	HRDU

I was born in Payagong, Pegu. I attended the primary school there and when I passed second standard my family moved to Rangoon and then I quit school and never attended school again. I used to help my mother selling things in the shop.

One night in 1998 when I was in North Okkalapa, I went to watch a festival (Pwe) and when it finished I prepared to go back home. I looked for my colleagues to come along with me. When I was looking for them, three men called me. One wore an army uniform and the others were in ordinary clothes. When I came up to them they took me to a teashop.

They tried to persuade me to join the army. I refused to join and they started asking me to show them my ID card, but I did not have it, so they threatened me that I would be sent to jail, because I did not have the card. They told me that if I joined the army I would not be sent to jail. I was afraid to go to jail and started to follow them. I learned later that night there were ten people stopped by the army and forced to join the army.

That night I was sent to Minggladon military camp, and I stayed there nearly a month. Then I was sent to No. 12 Divisional Training Central in Mergui for military training. I was under the training for four months. There were 120 men at that training camp. During training I saw many soldiers who were younger than I was. Some were just only 11 or 12 years old.

During the training in the morning we had to do some work in the camp like cutting grass, collecting wood, carrying water and do other jobs. In the evening we started our training. Old men and young men had to do the same. When the old men had to carry, for example a 12 kilogram pack we young boys also had to do the same. They said it was because we received the equal amount in salary.

After the training I was sent to LIB 433 camp. I stayed in the battalion for one month and we had to go to a border camp. We joined up with a column led by Captain Aung Min Oo and came to the border. We brought 60 porters with us. I have learned that four porters were shot dead because they could not carry their loads any longer. I carried one G-4 rifle and 200 cartridges, two sets of army uniforms and my other clothes along. My company was No.1 in LIB 433 headed by Captain Aung Kaing Lynn. We arrived at Htaw Ma Pyo on the border and stationed there.

Not long after arriving at that camp, I ran away. I ran away when I went out to shoot a bird with the sling shot near the camp. I looked down to the foot of the mountain inside Thailand and I saw people and a car in a far distance. I decided to run away and, if I got a chance to work in Thailand and got some money, I would find a way to go back to my homeland. I have not been happy since I was forced to join the army. I have always felt homesick.

When we were in Htaw Ma Pyo camp, our officers told us not to desert. They said that if we ran away to Thailand the Thai army would arrest us and give us to the Ngapway (the Karen revolution army), and the Ngapway would cut off our heads. Most of the soldiers are not happy in the army and want to run away but are afraid that they will be captured and killed. From the time our column was set up to the time I ran away, there were eight soldiers who ran away. Two were recaptured, sent back to the HQ and jailed.

After I ran away, I met Burmese villagers working in Thailand and they helped me by trying to look for work for me. Unfortunately Thai businessmen said that I was too young to work for them. Later I followed some villagers from the refugee camp and stayed there for a week. After that, a Thai officer in the camp picked me up and sent me to a Thai army camp. Later they sent me to the KNLA in the jungle. The KNLA did not kill me and now I am staying with them. My greatest suffering is missing my parents and wanting to go back to my home.

Interview 46: Relocation, Forced Labor, Killing, Refugee

Name

Lee Reh

Sex:	Male
Age:	54
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Animist
Marital status	Married with six children
Address:	Thanaw Kalu village, Shadaw township, Karenni
Date of interview:	January 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

Last three years ago, the SPDC sent a letter to our village ordering us all to move out. Our village had 30 households and a population over 100 people. We did not want to move but we were forced to move against our will. None of us wanted to move because we did not want to leave our farms, houses, animals and belongings behind. But we had no choice, we were told that we would be shot dead and the village would be burnt down if we failed to go. The troops would kill everyone found in the region after their deadline as they would consider them supporters or sympathizers of ethnic armed groups. Finally we decided to hide in the forest nearby. We chose to do that because we did not want to live in Shadaw camp which was like a prison to us people who live up in the hills and love freedom.

All the villagers hid in the forest nearby. It was not peaceful living like that. We always lived in fear of the troops. We hid in the deep forest or near our farms. We took the paddy with us for food and brought more from the fields when we were short of food. We always moved around in the region to avoid meeting the military. When we went back to our village after a week, we found out that the entire village was burnt down. We did not know who burnt it but we were sure it was the Burmese troops. We went back to our hiding place and kept on hiding.

When we heard that troops were approaching our hiding place we ran away. It happened several times while we were hiding. Fortunately, the military did not find our places but I met them once while we were harvesting our land. The soldiers arrived and started shooting at us. Nobody was hit but we all ran away. When we returned, the soldiers had burnt our entire paddy in the fields including our farm huts. Everything had gone.

I did not hear of any killing by the military while we were hiding and moving around in the region. People ran away and hid as soon as they heard the soldiers were coming to the region. Some were shot at but narrowly escaped.

Our health when hiding was so terrible. Many people got sick and died afterwards. Many children and old people died of diarrhea. In my group of 100 people hiding in one place, there were five old people and ten children who died of diarrhea in two years. We only had herbal medicines. My wife died in the first year after hiding in the jungle. She was sick with some unknown disease and one of my children died of diarrhea in July 1998.

If we could find a place to plant, we were able to work in the hills. But in such a dangerous situation, we could not work peacefully. We were always insecure and worried about the soldiers coming. We had to cultivate a small piece of land in one place here and there in order to avoid being found by the soldiers. It was hard to work in different places. The harvest was worse this year (1998). We could not grow enough for ourselves. We could hardly earn enough. We took a risk going to a Shan village and sold our cattle last year and

bought the paddy for next harvest. But there has been an intensive military activity in the region since the last rainy season. We did not dare go and buy the paddy for cultivation any more. Now troops are moving around in the region. We had been eating only boiled rice and salt for a long time.

I did not want live like that so I decided to find a better way to escape from all that. I would die if I continued to live like that. I took my children with me when I saw some people were heading for Thailand. They passed through our place and I asked them where they were going. Some other people from my group also moved to the Shan border to look for a job then. When we arrived at the Salween River bank, the number of people had grown to many more. They were people from different places in Karenni and Shan States. It took us a week to get here.

I hope the situation here will be better than back home. I had never heard of refugee camps in Thailand until I got here. As far as I can see, it is very good here. I don't dare go back to the place I lived. I don't want to be killed by the troops. I hope more of our people are coming soon.

Interview 47: Relocation, Livelihood,

Name	Nar Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	50
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Animist
Marital status	Married with four children
Address:	Kaleh La village, Shadaw township, Karenni
Date of interview:	January , 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

Three years ago, the SPDC sent a letter to our village ordering us to move out. Our village had 15 households and the population was around 70 people. We did not want to move but we were forced to move against our will. None of us wanted to move because we did not want to leave our fields, houses, animals and belongings behind. We all knew that the life in the concentration camp would be worse than living in the village as there were many troops nearby in Shadaw camp. It would be unavoidable to work as forced laborers or porters while living in the camp. My relatives in Shadaw also informed us that the camps were already crowded and there was an insufficient supply of water. But we did not have a choice, we were told that we would be shot dead and the village would be burnt down if we failed to go. The troops would kill everyone found in the region after their deadline as they would consider them supporters or sympathizers of the armed ethnic groups.

Only two families moved to Shadaw while the rest either moved to Lu Moon Soe in Mauk Mae township, Shan State, or hid in the jungle nearby the village. At first we thought that living in the jungle would be better than moving to the relocation site. However, life when hiding in the jungle was not so easy. In the first year, we were able to go back to

our village secretly and bring out the food we had hidden before we moved into the jungle. We went back and brought out as much food as we could and ate it. We could not carry it all at one time. It was very frightening and dangerous to go back to the village because we might meet the military in the region. We had to inquire about the presence of troops before we went back to bring out our food. We would be shot without question if we were found by the military.

After staying in the jungle for about one year, it became impossible to go back and bring out food from the village as before. The military burnt down the entire village in 1997. There was no more food left there. Also we could not settle down and work in the hills in one place due to the constant fear of the military. So we decided to move to Lu Moon Soe village in Mauk Mae township, Shan State.

This village was not in the list of those being forcibly relocated by the military. It is situated on the border of Karenni and Shan State. But the villagers lived in a constant fear of military harassment. Whenever troops came to the village, the soldiers looted whatever they wanted. The soldiers also destroyed the houses, killed the animals and rounded up the villagers to be porters. The villagers had to run away when the military came into the village to escape being used as porters.

Living in the new village was not so good, too. We did not have a good harvest as the land was not good for cultivation. The whole village suffered from lack of food. People were starving. More people also arrived from other villages even though living there was not good. Most were Karenni villagers from Kyu Lae, Ka Lae La and Darida villages who had hid in the jungle like us before. They had hid in the jungle since their villages were ordered to move to Shadaw camp in 1996. Due to the increasing difficulties in the jungle, they moved to the villages on the border of Karenni and Shan states.

As I told you, we were living on this border, and in fear of harassment by the troops both from the Shan State and Karenni areas. Troops from Division 55 based in Se-son township, Shan State always came as well as some troops from Loikaw, Karenni and forced people to work as porters. When the troops entered the village or we heard they were coming, we all ran away. I was rounded up with two other villagers by the Burmese troops in 1998 March. They caught us while we are running away from them. They beat us on our backs with bamboo sticks and ordered us to carry the shells for them. They told us they would kill all three of us if we tried to escape. We did not dare run away after that threat. It was a mobile military column in the region. We were ordered to carry the shells and ammunition on our backs. I myself carried six 57" motor shells. It was very heavy for us. We went along with the troops to the Pun River. We carried these heavy loads for five days. My back was torn and bruised. There was no beating physically, but we were verbally abused all the way. The food given was not much, a very small amount of food was given twice a day. It was only rice and chilis. I did not dare ask for more food as the soldiers would torture us. After five days of working as porters, we were released.

Since 1998, there has been more intensive military activity in the area where my village is situated. That made us more miserable both by day and night. We could not stay without fear of being conscripted as porters. Also earning our living had become difficult for us. Therefore, I decided to come to the Thai border. Altogether seven households, about 25 persons, left the village the same day. Most were people who had moved to Lu Moon Soe from other villages. The other villagers would also like to leave the village but it was very difficult for them to abandon their fields and other property. We met more people

when we arrived at the Salween River. We did not expect to see so many people and I was shocked to see as many people as those. There were about 400 in all. We walked as quickly as we could, because we were afraid that the Burmese troops would follow us. We walked eight days to get to the border. Many people, mostly children and old people, got sick on the way. Most suffered from diarrhea and exhaustion. Fortunately, nobody died.

Interview 48: Relocation, Livelihood, Women

Name	Taw Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	52
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Animist
Marital status	Married with six children
Address:	Par Law village, Loikaw township, Karenni
Date of interview:	January, 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

Villages between Loikaw and the Pon river were relocated to my village in 1996. Since then, the living situation has become worse and military activities have doubled in the region. Before the moving order, villagers in my village had no problem for a living. They could manage to earn enough for their families. The villagers who were relocated from other villages were not provided with anything by the military. The military only gave a plot of land 50 ft x 50 ft. People had to collect bamboo and wood for building their own houses. When they did not have enough rice, they boiled the little they had and shared it among family members. Some could get help from relatives if they had any in the village. There was no clinic in the village, so many became sick. After the villagers from Daw Saw Kyu, Saw Se, Daw Ta Yoke and other villages moved to my village, we did not earn enough to live. Also we suffered from many abuses by the increasing presence of the military.

Villagers were ordered to build up fences both for the village and the military outpost. Thirty to forty soldiers were stationed at the outpost inside the village. They were from LIB 72. There were to be two fences for the village and we had to plant sharpened bamboo sticks around each fence, which was six feet high. Each fence was six feet high. One person from each household had to work on this task in rotation. The military's demand for labor became greater in 1998. We were ordered to work for the military outpost and guard the village at night for security. Each night two villagers were ordered to be on sentry duty. Five others were required to work at the outpost every day in the daytime. They were ordered to collect firewood, fetch water and clean the camp. The troops ordered the villagers to fetch water using their ox-carts at least five times in a day. It became more difficult in hot season when water was very scarce. If men were not available, women had to go and work. On average, my family had to supply labor work four times a month in 1998.

The troops ordered us to build three gates for the village. No one was allowed to go in or out between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. The gates were closed during that time. Villagers were

only allowed to go out in the daytime. It made it difficult for the villagers to work on their lands, which mostly lay outside the village. If a person from another village came to our village he was required to leave our village before 6 p.m. If he wanted to stay overnight in the village, he was required to report to the village authorities. If he failed to report and was found out by the authorities, the authorities would fine him 500 *kyat* and his host 1,000 *kyat*.

The troops at the outpost were very bad. They stole chickens and pigs from the villagers. They did not care even if we built a fence around our house, they just entered and took anything they wanted. When we complained they said they would give us money later but never we got any. I did not hear of any killing or beating of the villagers by the troops.

I was rounded up and tortured by the SPDC troops in April 1998. I was accused of having relatives in the KNPP army. The soldiers said they received information about my relatives in the KNPP army, which was entirely false. I do not have any relatives in the KNPP army. The soldiers first came to my home and called out my name. When I came out the soldiers started beating me. They kicked me with their military boots all over my body. I knew they were from LIB72 and led by a captain whose name I did not know. While they were beating me, another five or six soldiers arrived at my home with my son-in-law from another ward. My son-in-law had his hands tied behind his back. When I saw him, his face was bloody and he had bruises on his eyes. Neither of us knew the reason why we were being treated like that. Later we both were taken outside the village. My hands were tied on the way. The soldiers kept beating my head and other parts of my body with a wooden stick all the way. I had a cut on my head and blood was running down.

When we arrived outside of the village, the soldiers forced both of us to kneel down while our hands were tied behind. The officer inserted the barrel of a pistol into my mouth and threatened to kill me right away. He told me “I will kill both of you and then your wives as well.” He asked if we had relatives in the KNPP army and where they were now. He slashed to my face many times. Then he ordered the soldiers to untie our hands, and told us to dig a pit. He said it was for both of us to be buried alive. We were scared to face that fate. Our bodies were shaking with fear. My son-in-law was crying while he was digging the pit. He pleaded with the officer not to kill us as we did not have any relatives in the KNPP. The officer paid no attention to his plea. The soldiers hit him on the nape of his neck and shouted at him to stop speaking. After we finished the officer forced us to jump into the pit and lay down. We thought we would die soon. The pit was wide enough for one person to lay down, so my son-in-law was under my body. All I could do was close my eyes and pray. However, the officer changed his mind and ordered us to come out from the pit. I did not know why he changed his mind, but I think the gods loved us and saved us.

We were taken back to the village after the soldier had tied our hands behind our backs again. They took us to the primary school. While our hands were still tied behind us, the soldiers poured buckets of water over our heads. One bucket after another came down until we fell down on the ground. One soldier hit my head and others hit my face and nose with their bare hands. Then the officer ordered the soldiers to detain us in a house near the school. My hearing has not been normal since that beating. We were detained at the house one night and released the next day. The troops killed three pigs while they were staying in the village. I was in bed for one month to recover from these tortures. I am still frightened of being treated like that again.

It was the last time I have been tortured physically, but much harassment tortured me mentally. The soldiers came to my house and checked on me. If they did not find me at home, they questioned all my family about where I was. They left a message for me to report to them as soon as I got back home. I felt I was constantly watched and harassed. I did not feel happy and comfortable living like that.

Seventeen of us came to Thailand together from the village. We did not dare tell many people we were leaving because we were afraid the news would leak out. We met other people on the way and joined them. It took ten days to get here.

I do not dare go back to my village. The military will find out that our family is missing from the village. They will definitely kill all of us if we go back to the village. I feel safer here, and better.

Interview: 49: Relocation, Women, Child, Arrest, Killing, Torture, Forced Labor

Name	Withheld
Sex:	Male
Age:	Not-stated
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	farmer
Religion:	Animist
Marital status	married with children
Address:	Withheld
Date of interview:	January, 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

Our village had to move to Chee Paw Klo village in the middle of 1996. All the villages in our village tract were ordered to move there. Living conditions in the new place was not good and we did not want to move there. However, we had to do as we were ordered. The SPDC troops would have killed us if they found us in our village after their deadline. For the first month after we arrived at the new site, we were given five tins of rice each to last for a week but that was not enough.

As soon as we arrived at the new site, we were ordered to provide forced labor by the SPDC troops. They ordered us to build fences six feet high around their military barracks. Also they ordered a fence to be built in a two-mile-radius around the relocation site. The soldiers were from LIB 428. Around 30 soldiers were stationed at Chee Paw Klo village.

There are 16 wards in the relocation site. The population was around 3,000 people. They were from Chee Paw Klo village tract, Daw Ku village tract and Gaylier village tract. Each household had to provide one person each for one day a week to do forced labor.

In February 1998, five persons from each ward in the relocation site were summoned to work on the motor road renovation between Demozaw and Daw Tamagi. In rotation, one person from each household had to go for one week to work on the road. The road was 29 miles long. The military provided trucks to transport the people from the relocation site to

the road site. The trucks arrived early in the morning and took 80 persons to the work site. People had to bring their own food and tools for working. I have personally worked on that renovation. I worked ten times in 1998 on this project as I was the only able-bodied man in my family. We were ordered to level the ground for laying the road, to collect stones and sand and to dig trenches around the motor road. The troops demanded five persons from each ward regardless of sex. I saw young girls and old people working there with other workers. The road construction is still going on. If we had money to find a substitute for the work quota, we could avoid going and working there. It would cost 100 *kyat* a day to hire a substitute that was quite impossible for us to find. The working conditions on the work site were so bad. We were not allowed to rest during the entire day except at lunchtime. Soldiers from LIB 428 and 530 were guarding us while the people were working at the work site. If they found someone taking a rest, they shouted very rude words like “You fucking Kayah are lazy and do not want to work hard.” They also said “This road is for you and you have to work hard.” I did not understand why they said this road was for us as we never use this inland road for ourselves. Only the military use the road for their military supplies.

In March we were told to move back to Daw Law Khu village track near the military headquarters of Loikaw. We were happy to return to our own area and thought we could escape from forced labor demanded by the military. However, we were driven into a worse situation involving forced labor and economic hardship. There were both SPDC and Naga (a Karenni splinter group) guarding the region. We had to work and pay taxes to both, sometimes for the joint columns of both as well. There was a checkpoint near our village and run by the Naga. The Naga troops levied ten *kyat* for each tin of corn, paddy or peanuts traded into the village. As the harvest was not good because of constant demands of forced labor and drought, and most of our villagers relied on trade goods. Increasing taxation has caused the people to suffer more starvation. The troops did not allow us to buy more than one basket of rice from outside the village. If you traded more the one basket of rice, you are allowed to take only one basket and the rest would be taken away by the soldiers. They would later give you a ration of rice that was one basket per week.

Villagers were summoned to work at the Naga base near the village. That was once or twice a week. The village headman had to collect the people to do the work. They were ordered to repair the fence, collect wood and water, work in the vegetable fields and do other odd jobs in the camp. My wife had to go and work there when I was working on other forced labor tasks in other places.

LIB 427 forcibly confiscated over 20,000 acres of land at Kan Khunit Sint, in Ngwe Taung in 1997. In April 1998, two persons were assigned to work on six plots of land to plough summer paddy. Not only did people have to plough the land, but also they had to dig channels for the water supply from Chee Paw Klo to Ngwe Taung that was two miles far. I was among the laborers forced to work on this summer paddy project. I worked eight days at a time and had to work there three times. Some people had oxen so it was not difficult for them to plough by cart. But for me it was very hard to work.

In May, one person from each household had to work one week at Nam Khom Lake that was 15 miles away from my village. Around 400 villagers from Ngwe Taung, Daw Talaw Du and Chee Paw Klo all had to go and prepare for paddy cultivation near the lake. This was ordered by the SPDC troops from Ngwe Taung.

In June 1998, our ward was given 30 acres of land in the Daw Law Khaw area by

the military and required to cultivate green beans. Only the land and bean seeds were provided and we had to spend all our time working at this. The troops from LIB 427 told us that all the benefit would be for the military and we had to pay back the cost of the seed after the harvest. It was not a good harvest and we were all forced to pay compensation for the seeds given to us for cultivation. Each household was charged 400 *kyat* for compensation to the LIB 427 after the harvest. Around 30 cattle were shot because they trespassed onto the planted fields. No compensation was paid to the villagers for killing their cattle.

In addition to the increasing demand of forced labor, there was a threat to our livelihood. On November 2, 1998, about 20 soldiers from Naga and 80 soldiers from LIB 102 arrived at our village. It was a joint military column of the Naga and the SPDC. It was in the morning. The soldiers rounded up all the villagers and gathered them in front of the primary school. The soldiers singled out three villagers, including me. The other two were Htoo Reh, 40 years old and Ngo Rei, 38 years old. The troops accused us of being in communication with the KNPP. The military officer named Captain Ngwe Thein kicked our heads with his military boots. Other soldiers grabbed our hair and smashed into our faces with their bare hands. The officer asked, "Would you like to be killed or will you tell us about the troops?" We did not have any communication with the KNPP and we said that we were just civilians. They kept treating us like that for two hours while the other villagers were forced to stay in front of the school. Our hands were tied on our backs and we were left under the sun for the whole day. No food or water was provided. At night, a military truck arrived at our village and the soldiers took the three of us to IB54 in Loikaw. The soldiers also took other male villagers from my village and from Daw Ta Kale, Daw Tanaw and Daw Pu to Loikaw. I did not know how many of them at that time. We all were detained in the LIB54 base.

On the next day, MI.27 came and took me to their headquarters. They accused me of providing food to KNPP soldiers. Thirteen people in one group were interrogated without rest. They smashed my face and beat my body with wooden sticks. They grabbed my hair and hit my face with their sandals. It went on the whole day. When I could not stand up or sit, they carried my body and threw me into a water tank in the room. They put my face down in the water and held it there several times. I could not remember how many times they did that. I got dizzy and almost lost consciousness. After that, they forced me to do sit-ups and stand-ups 400 times. When I could not do as they ordered, they beat my back with wooden sticks. They also inserted wires into my ears on both sides and gave me electric shocks so I lost consciousness. When I came to, I was naked and they were still with me. They gave me electric shocks again. They also burnt my genitals. They also covered my face with a plastic bag and made me almost suffocate. They forced me to kneel on the pebbles and when I could not sit any more because it was so painful, they beat me all over my body, again and again. No water or food was given for one day and one night. I was taken back to IB54 after that.

When I got back there, the soldiers gave me rice but I could not eat and I could not even move properly. I slept on the floor almost all the time. Villagers from my village and from other villages were in the same barracks as me. The MI singled out some people every day and when they came back they had been badly tortured. I spent 15 days in the IB54 base. Every day the MI took some people and tortured. All of us were interrogated and tortured. After 15 days, we were taken to MI.27 office. We all had our photographs taken

and records kept. Twelve people were sent to Loikaw Prison for allegedly having connections with armed groups. They were charged under criminal act 17(a), I think. They were U Htoo Rei (50 years old), U Do Rei (35 years old), U Baw Rei (40 years old), U Pho Rei (45 years old), U Po Rei (40 years old), Maung Klaw Rei (30 years old), Maung Shar Rei (20 years old), U Khu Rei, U Pha Rei (35 year old), U Nga Rei, Ngo Rei (54 years old) and one whose name I do not remember. The MI warned me that it would be my responsibility if something happened in the region. I was required to sign an agreement saying that I would behave myself after my release. Altogether 132 villagers were released on December 4.

When we got back, we found out that most of our belongings were destroyed or taken. I did not want to stay in the village and was afraid that I would be arrested again. I decided to leave the village. Fourteen villagers from Daw Pu, Daw Pe and my village came here together. It took twenty days to get here. When we arrived to the Pon River, the water was so strong we did not dare cross it. We did not eat food for two days during the journey. My niece could not walk well after one week as she was so tired. I arrived at the camp on January 31, 1999.

I am still not feeling well. I stayed at my friends' house in the camp. I can't walk as much as before and easily get tired. My hearing is not good, too. I get chest pains when I sleep. I think it is because of the treatment I received during the interrogation.

Interview 50: Relocation, Forced Labor, Women, Torture

Name	Mei Rei
Sex:	Male
Age:	30
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	farmer
Religion:	Animist
Marital status	Married with two children
Address:	Daw Soe Sa village, Shadaw township, Karenni
Date of interview:	February , 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

I arrived here on January 31, 1998 together with over 400 refugees from all over the Karenni region.

My village was ordered to move to Shadaw in 1996. When we moved, there were over 1,000 people living in the very small area outside Shadaw. Nothing was provided by the military. We had to build our own houses ourselves. In the beginning we ate the food we carried from our village, but when all that food was gone, we had to collect vegetables from nearby.

From 1996 to just before I left to come here at the end of 1998, people in the relocation camp were required to work for forced labor projects. Since January 1998, we have been ordered to work on the renovation of Loikaw-Pon River-Shadaw motor road. One person from each household was collected and forced to work. The men had to crush rocks and the women had to carry the rocks to the road renovation site. We had to go for

four days at a time and work there once a fortnight. Nobody dared refuse to go, because the military said we would be harshly punished if we failed to work as necessary.

There was also forced labor at the LIB 428 base for us in 1998. One person from each household had to go and work at the military camp for a day. That happened twice a month. If there was no male who could go and work as required, children over 12 years old had to go in substitution. Even a widow had to go if her household was assigned. She had to leave her young children left behind. People had to do all the odd jobs at the military base, such as repairing fences, digging trenches and collecting water and firewood. I personally have worked there. Though I was not beaten up by the soldiers, I have seen many beatings of the villagers by the soldiers. Say Rei, a 28-year-old Karenni villager, was beaten by the soldiers when he could not work well. It was in March 1998. He was kicked with military boots on his back and he fell down on the ground. The soldiers kicked him again on his legs when he lay on the ground. He could not stand up again right away because of the pain in his legs. Those who were sick and weak also had to do this manual work. Beating was very common.

In 1999 January just before I came here, we were forced to work on the construction of new military base of LIB 311 in Shadaw. We had to bring our own food and tools to work there for three days. On the day we had to go, the village headman could not collect the number of people as it was required. The soldiers came and found out that we still needed more people. The soldiers forced the village headman to sit under the scorching sun for two hours. They ordered him to collect the number of people they later required. They also told us that we would all face the same fate as our village headman if we failed to provide labor in the future. When we went there to work, we were ordered to dig trenches, build fences and sharpen the bamboo to plant them around the fence.

I was used as a porter in December 1997. It was for a column from LIB 511. Three wards in the relocation camps had to provide three people to porter for them. I was on of the three people. We had to carry things that were very heavy. It took three days for us to walk between Shadaw and Tatamaw. I was beaten while I was working as a porter. The soldiers asked the short way to Tatamaw. I actually did not know one, so I said I did not know. The soldiers shouted "You Kayah did not know anything and you're idiots" and beat me with rifle butts on my head. An officer also came and hit into my face again and again. Only one meal was provided a day and only when there was food left after the soldiers had their dinner.

I was detained a while in July 1998. I came back from another house in my village for a traditional ceremony that could only be held at night. I met soldiers from LIB 428 on my way back who were patrolling the camp. The soldiers accused me, saying I was coming from a meeting with the KNPP, and beat me all over my body. They took me to the detention cells in the camp and put me in the stocks. The next day, other village headmen came and guaranteed my innocence and the soldiers released me.

I did not want to stay under these circumstances and decided to leave for Thailand. When we first left we were about 50 people, but we met more from Daw Le Khu, Daw Naw Bu and Daw Ei Thaw on the way. It took ten days to get here. Mostly children could not walk and were sick. One woman from Ta Say Bu village gave birth on the way. She was a 38-year-old Karenni woman. Other women helped her. No medicine was available. She received medical assistance only after she got here. Some are still under medication from

their illnesses. Currently I am staying with my family at the nursery school provided by the camp authorities. I will build my own house soon, I hope.

Interview 51: Relocation, Arrest, Torture

Name	Saw Lee Mon
Sex:	Male
Age:	28
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Baptist
Marital status	Single
Address:	Daw Ta Hill village, Disakha village track, Loikaw township, Karenni
Date of interview:	February, 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

I left my village on January 3, 1999 and arrived here in January 16. Our village has never been ordered to relocate. However, we had been ordered to do many types of forced labor and act as unpaid porters. This has increased recently and that's why I decided to come here.

I was taken as a porter in October 1998 by the SPDC Column 7 from Phe Khone township. The troops came to my village and stationed an outpost there. The troops later called the village headman and demanded six villagers to act as guides for the mobile column in the region. If he failed to provide all the people, he would have to go himself as well. He was not able to collect the six people as required, so he was put in the stocks. His name is El Le Khee, 40 years old Baptist Karenni. He was detained for 24 hours and troops demanded 1,500 *kyat* and 15 *viss* of meat as ransom. The village was not able to give the money required. The next day, the troops entered the village and arrested people at random. I was rounded up while I was hiding in my house. Altogether six people were rounded but five managed to escape on the first day. I worked with the administration section of the column so I could not escape. There were eight people from Kuu Na village, seven from Wah Khike village and four from Paya Phyu village. Some were rounded up from their fields and conscripted as porters too. The fields were then burnt. All of us had to carry shells, ammunition, food, rice and office materials. I later carried four motor shells. It took me two days to carry things and go along with the troops. The soldiers beat all of us frequently. I was also beaten when I was exhausted. First the soldiers kicked me on my back with their military boots and hit me with bamboo sticks. Four soldiers kicked near the waist when I fell down on the ground. Blood later came out from my body. I was so thirsty and could not walk any more. But I had to carry on my portering. They kept beating me until I stood up and carried the things. Two other porters were also beaten. We were given two meals a day. One was given at 4 a.m. and second was at 1 p.m.

Forced labor in the military outpost was very common. There was a military training school at the outpost in my village. It has resulted the people to work more forced labor. My

last forced labor at the outpost of Column.7 was on December 15, 1998. We were ordered to make fences, water the vegetable plantations, carry stones and collect wood for the soldiers. We had to carry stones three times from a place that was five miles far from the outpost. If you had a cart you could use it. Otherwise, manual work was required. Villagers were ordered to do this kind of work twice a week. The stones were used for building a road in the military compound. It was a big compound because it was a training site for soldiers from See Sai and Phe Khone. There were always between 100 to 200 soldiers there at any one time. People had to carry water for the soldiers when they had to work in the outpost. The soldiers killed the oxen and cattle if they trespassed into the compound. They did not pay any compensation, instead they asked for 5,000 *kyat* from the owner for compensation.

I decided to come here because I did not want live like that. Three friends fled together when we were forcibly ordered to cut wood for the army in mid-December. Twenty villagers with their own ox-carts were ordered to go to a place near Daw Bi Bat village along with 30 soldiers. We had to cut wood and carry it back on a cart to their military outpost. The wood would be sold by the soldiers for their own benefit. While we were on the way back to our village, we decided to flee to the border.

It took us fifteen days to get here. We did not bring anything with us as we had not planned to run away. We begged for food from other villagers we found on the way. They helped to show us the way to get here. I am still not feeling well. I had diarrhea during the journey and am still taking medication at the clinic here.

Interview 52: Forced Labor, Relocation, Women

Name	Bu Mei
Sex:	Female
Age:	20
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Baptist
Marital status	Single
Address:	Dari Dah village, Shadaw township, Karenni State, Karenni
Date of interview:	February, 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

I arrived here on January 11, 1999. My village was moved to Nwa La Boe village in 1996 as ordered by the SPDC. They threatened that they would consider anyone found after the deadline as an enemy and would kill them. Some families moved to Shadaw. Nwa La Boe is smaller than Shadaw and about 50 households from the village moved there.

During the first month after we arrived Nwa La Boe, the military gave us four tins of rice for one week, but only once. They did not give anything after that. We were provided with a small piece of land. There were about 1,000 people that moved from other villages such as Daw Sa See, Daw Le Da, Daw Hee Suu, Daw Khu Le, Daw La Le, Daw Klaw All, Daw Klo Ko, Daw Ka Raw Le, Dari Dah, Daw Muu See, Daw Mu Le and Daw Tanaw. The military did not allow the new people to return to their homes or work outside the new relocation site.

Not only were we put in this designated area, but we were also ordered to do a lot of unpaid work after moving there. In 1998, we had to perform many different kinds of forced labors during the year. Since mid-1998 villagers were ordered to work on the motor road renovation and extension project in Taunggyi and Loikaw. People were ordered to plant trees along the road, to dig the ground for road foundations, to carry stones for road construction and to level the road. One person from each household was collected and ordered to work full time at the work site. There were about 100 laborers from the relocation site at each time. People got up early and went to the work site that was one and half hours walk from the relocation site. Work started at 9 a.m. and finished at 4 p.m. We had to carry our own food and we got no pay. If someone failed to go, he had to pay 100-150 *kyat* per day as a fine. If you did not have money to pay the fine, you had to go even if you were sick. I saw some children aged 12 years old working there as their parents were ill or out on other forced labor projects. It was exhausting to carry stones to the work site. Soldiers from LIB 250 guarded us while we worked. I was personally beaten with sticks when I took a rest in the afternoon. I could no longer work as I was so exhausted and had to rest. The soldiers found out and beat me with sticks. It was very violent and painful. The soldiers watched people carrying stones. They forced everyone to carry heavy loads. If they could not carry theirs, the soldiers beat their backs with sticks mercilessly.

In September 1998, three women went out from the camp to gather vegetables for their families. They thought there would be no danger for them as they were married with children. They were Daw Sar See, 45 years old, Thee Mei and one whose name I do not know. All three were from my village and all Karenni. Thee Mei had her two-year-old child with her. They met the soldiers from LIB250. All three women were raped by five soldiers in the forest. After raping them, the soldiers threatened the women saying they were not to report this case to anybody or else they would kill the women. Thee Mei was my cousin and she told her parents and they told me.

I didn't want to be ordered to carry on working without pay any more. We did not have time to work for ourselves and our families. We were always busy carrying out forced labor as ordered by the military. So I decided to come here. Fifteen people left together on January 10, 1999. My mother is still in the village because she is too old to walk. I did not want to leave my mother but she said, "You are young and you go first. Otherwise you will die of starvation." I just brought rice for the journey. My brother-in-law had been to the border for cattle trading. We spent six nights travelling. When we got to the Salween River, the number of people trying to leave had reached more than 300. Many people got malaria, diarrhea and were exhausted. Some old people had to be carried by their relatives. There was no medicine for them. We did not have enough rice for six days and did not eat for one day. Some people are still under medication.

I am staying at my relative's house in Camp 2. I worry about my mother who was left behind. I feel safer here than back in my village. I don't know what to do next and I don't know where to go.

Interview 53: Relocation, Livelihood, Forced Labor, Torture

Name	Nar Tha
Sex:	Male

Age: over 50
 Ethnicity: Karenni
 Occupation: Security guard at the hospital
 Religion: Roman Catholic
 Marital status: Married with six children
 Address: Dari Dah village, Shadaw township, Karenni
 Date of interview: February , 1999
 Place of interview: Karenni camp 2, Thailand
 Source: HRDU

Only one week was given for my village to relocate either to Shadaw or Pa Long or Nwa La Boe in 1996. The letter making the order was sent to the village headman saying that we had to move out of the village without fail. Anyone would be shot dead without questions after the deadline, the letter said.

Only two or three households, including my family, moved to Shadaw, while others moved to Nwa La Boe and Daw Ta Maw village. Our church leader moved to Daw Ta Maw with his followers. In the Shadaw site, there were three main quarters, the south, the north and the middle. My village Dri Dah was the biggest in the northern quarter. We had a hospital, a primary school and a church.

When we got to Shadaw, a small piece of land was given to each family. It was very crowded with villagers from different villages. First we had to clear the bushes and trees on the land we were given. The land was 20 ft x 30 ft wide and had no trees for shade. Many got sick and had diarrhea, some even died from disease. In the first year, about 100 died at the new place. I worked at the clinic so I saw the lists of dead persons there. Many other people died but was not reported to the clinic. The actual number of deaths would be much higher than the lists in the clinic. I estimate 200-300 people died in one year out of 4,000 people in the site. A lack of sufficient medicine was the other reason for the deaths. No medicine was available in the clinic. Only people who had money could get good treatment from another clinic. The number of such people was very small as most were too poor to meet their daily needs.

People on the site were not allowed to go out or go back to their villages. Since they were hungry, some villagers tried to return and bring back the food they had left behind. Some got rounded up and imprisoned later. Some were shot and some disappeared. I heard some were killed but I did not see any bodies. First the camp was guarded by IB 54 and then by LIB 261 and 250 in rotation. There was an SPDC outpost at Mya Zaydi hill and it was always patrolled.

I worked as a guide or porter with a mobile military column in the region for more than 20 times in 1998. I mostly worked as a guide for them as I was older and the troops knew me well. The other villagers were conscripted as porters and worked as porters. Soldiers always threatened the porters to work well or get a beating. People were afraid to be beaten so they obeyed the orders as far as they could. The things they had to carry were very heavy. The duration for working as porters was not the same. Sometimes it took five days or ten days, but sometimes it took 15 days. I saw many were beaten for being unable to carry their loads. There was not enough food and only a handful of rice was provided for each meal.

The last time the military column demanded me to work as a guide was last October, 1998. The troops were from LIB 108 under the command of Division 55 based in Yut Sauk, Shan State. The officer sent a letter to my village headman with my name in it. The letter also demanded the number of porters they required. I had worked as a guide for many times in 1998 and I did not want to carry on working like that. Even though the troops and columns changed, they kept ordering me to work as a guide for their columns. I did not know why it happened only to me. This time, I did not work for them because my family was starving, they did not have enough rice to eat. My wife boiled the rice and fed the children with bamboo roots. I decided to hide. One soldier came and searched for me at my house. He did not find me and reported back to his superiors, Major Soe Htun and Major Moe Kyaw from LIB 108. Later Major Soe Htun came himself and asked my family about me. When my family said they did not know where I was, he left one bullet at my house. We did not know what was the meaning of leaving a bullet. It might have any meaning but it would not be a polite message. When I came back my family cried in fear. We decided to run away from the site. That was October 15, 1998. The whole family left for Loikaw and stayed there one week looking for a way to escape. After being unable to find the way, we decided to leave for the border via Shadaw. It was November 28. We met other people on the way and heard that some people had left earlier. We walked fast to catch up with the people who had left earlier. When we got to the Salween River, we saw many people from different areas such as Demawsoe and Daw Tama Gyi waiting for cross the river.

We brought rice with us but nothing else. Fortunately there was enough rice for five days' traveling. It would not be enough if we took more than five days. My wife could not walk fast as she had a pain in her knees. I saw one young woman give birth to a baby during the journey in the jungle. She was only 18-19 years old. She suffered from excessive bleeding after delivery. No medicine was available to cure her. She was left in the village on the way because she could not continue the journey. I hope she will be well soon. Some children were crying during the night-time as they were sick. We all were afraid the SPDC troops would hear and find us.

It took five days for us to get here. We arrived here on December 2, 1998. I feel safe here as I don't have to worry about my life. But I still want to go back to my village when the situation is peaceful.

Interview 54: Forced Labor, Relocation, Child, Livelihood

Name	A Lay Shwe
Sex:	Male
Age:	45
Ethnicity:	Geebar, Karenni
Occupation:	Government servant at communication office
Religion:	Roman Catholic
Marital status	Married with six children
Address:	Shadaw town, Karenni
Date of interview:	February , 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

I arrived here on January 30, 1999 from Shadaw. Even though I was a government servant, I could not escape from being conscripted as a porter. I did not want to suffer these abuses under the military so I decided to leave my town.

Just before I left my town on January 18, I was ordered to perform forced labor. Conscription for portering is still taking place in my town.

The last time I was taken as porter was two years ago. The soldiers entered our houses and rounded up all the men they found. I showed my government servant identity card, but no luck. They told me to talk to the officer later and took me to the base. They did not let me see the officer then and forced me to work as a porter.

Since 1988 and until now, people in the town have been ordered to go and contribute free labor for the military. One or two times a week, people from different wards in the town were ordered to cut wood and timber for military bases in the town. Each household had to provide one person for this work. The place people had to go and cut the trees was about one mile far from the town. We had to cut and carry bamboo or timber back to the military base in the town. On January 16, 1998, each ward was ordered to cut four pieces of timber 10 inches wide and 21 feet long within one week. I was among the people assigned to do this. The soldiers said the timber would be used for building a bridge for the newly transferred LIB 531. This unit moved to Shadaw around December 22-24, 1998. Troops were moved in and out frequently. The last unit before LIB 531 was LIB 247. I did not know where the bridge would be built. If a ward had a small number of houses, it was more difficult for them to do the work. We also had to carry ropes or bamboos. At least fourteen people were required to carry this timber and it was very hard work. After working two days, I could no longer carry on such hard work. So I returned home, gathered up my family, then ran away. Altogether thirteen people, including my family and other friends, came together.

Forced labor for military bases is not new for local people. Whatever the number of the unit, local people were ordered to do unpaid work for them. Once or twice a week, we had to go and work at their bases. On January 8, 1999, each household was asked to provide three lengths of timber that was six inches thick and six feet long for LIB 531. We were ordered to send them within a day, so I went to the forest early in the morning and brought them before the late evening. These timbers were later used for building fences and overheads. The soldiers always yelled at us and shouted rude words. Sometimes they said, "You Kayah are so bad and dumb. Because of that we have come here to teach you a lesson."

Other kinds of forced labor were also practiced. In November 1998, people from Shadaw relocation site were ordered to provide forced labor on the motor road between the Pon River and Shadaw. There was a road but it was destroyed during the rainy season. People were ordered to renovate the road. Each house had to provide one person for that. The soldiers marked the place for each ward to work on the renovation site. People had to clean the roadside that was three miles long and ten feet wide on each side. Our village had 21 households so 21 persons went and worked there. If there was no man available to come, women or children over 12 years old must come instead. People had to finish their quota of work or continue working until the work was completed. If some households failed to send their quota of persons they would be fined 50-100 *kyat* a day or put in detention. No one wanted to be fined and arrested so they came and worked even if they were sick. I saw some

people's health get worse after they had been forced to work and were sent to hospital when they got back to their homes.

I spent two nights sleeping outside of my village after I ran away from the military. I went back and took my family. My family sold the house and bought rice for the journey. We did not eat rice or food for two days. We begged for food from other villagers. I met other people at the Salween River but no SPDC troops. Many children got diarrhea and were exhausted. Some people needed to be carried by others. It took us 12 days to get here.

My infant son got diarrhea after we got here. He was sent to hospital for treatment. I don't know what to feel right now. I don't have a house for my family. I am still afraid of the SPDC and fear that they might follow us and attack us. I dare not go back now, but I will go back when I can go without fear of the SPDC.

Interview 55: Forced Labor, Relocation, Child

Name	Saw Rei
Sex:	Male
Age:	70
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Roman Catholic
Marital status	Widower with two children
Address:	Daw Su Sell village, Daw Klo Lei Du track, Shadaw, Karenni
Date of interview:	February , 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

Our village was close to Shadaw and SPDC troops frequently came before it was relocated there in 1996. Whenever the troops came, the soldiers killed the cattles, took our paddy and sometimes burnt the rice barns and farm huts. I moved to Shadaw as ordered and temporarily came back to the village after three months, to find the entire village burnt down. I did not see anyone dead in the village.

I came here in the middle of January 1999 from Shadaw camp because there was no way for us to survive any more. There was no food left to eat and we were like animals in the cage. We were not allowed to go out of the camp and earn our own living.

I personally have been made to work on forced labor several times. After the rainy season one person from each household was ordered to work without pay on the motor road construction between the Pon River and Shadaw. There were around 30-50 persons on one any one day. We had to go and work there three times a month for three months. We prepared our own food and used own tools when we went there in the morning. We walked on foot to the work site in the morning and walked back in the evening. Work started at 9 a.m. and finished at 4 p.m.

Last December 1998, one person from each household was collected and ordered to cut timber for the military. I do not know the unit number of the military but they were from a Shadaw-based battalion. Each household was ordered to collect six logs within a day. Each log must be six inches wide and six feet long. Even a widow was not spared from

providing forced labor. She was ordered to cut and carry four logs instead of six logs like other households. The place where the logs were available was a long way from Shadaw so we all had to walk far and cut the logs and then carry them back to town. The soldiers threatened us that if we were could not finish within a day four extra logs would be added into our quota. So we all tried to finish our quota within a day. I was beaten while I was taking a rest. It was very exhausting work under the hot sun so I took a rest. The soldiers came behind me and beat me with canes. I was so sweaty that I was really in pain. The soldiers asked for money from the households unable to provide their quota or if someone was very sick. They asked for 150 *kyat* for one person failing to provide labor.

I came with my family from the relocation site as I did not want to work any more on forced and unpaid labor. We were subject to forced labor for different kinds of work and for different military battalions. We did not have time to earn money for ourselves. We were like robots working as ordered by the controller. I would rather die if I had to stay in that situation any more.

It took me two weeks to get here. I met other people during the journey. I did not expect to see people fleeing like me so I was shocked. We did not see any SPDC troops when traveling as we avoided the regular paths. We came through the jungle, so it was very exhausting. My youngest son was sick and he is still in hospital. The medic said he has a high fever now. I don't know what I should do next. I will build a new house and stay here until the situation improves. It would be good if there are no SPDC troop in my region.

Interview 56: Relocation, Refugee, Arrest, Torture

Name	Nga Rei
Sex:	Male
Age:	36
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Roman Catholic
Marital status	Divorced
Address:	Daw Pu village, Daw Pu track, Demawsoe township, Karenni
Date of interview:	February , 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

I arrived here on January 30, 1999. It took me twenty days to get here. I came with friends from my village. I was arrested and tortured by the SPDC in November 1998 and I did not dare stay in my village.

I was arrested twice in 1998 and accused of being a KNPP supporter. The first time was in April 1998 by the Naga (KNPP splinter group). I was on my way back from Ngwe Taung to my village. I went to see my son who lived with my divorced wife. While I was sitting on the bus, Captain Thein Aung, Captain Kyaw Htay, Private Ba Liok and Private Chaw Lwin from Naga rounded me up and took me to Demawsoe police station in a horse-cart. It took half an hour to get to the police station. The police informed the MI and took me to a separate building in the compound. Four or five MIs interrogated me about my

contacts and my activities with the KNPP. I was not a KNPP supporter so I did not know how to answer their questions. At first they did not use force or torture me, but later they became violent. They tied my hands behind my back and made me stand up. They hit my shin-bones and thighs with sticks, hard. Then they made me lie down and rolled wooden rollers on my shins. The interrogation went on the whole night without rest. No food or water was given to me. They tied four car tires together and put me inside the tires while my hands were still tied behind, and then rolled the tires on the ground. They covered my face with a plastic bag and poured water until I was suffocated. They forced me to lie down on the wooden bed with nails on it. The nails were so sharp that blood came out from my back. This went on for three days. I was given a little water during those three days, but no food. They detained me for 18 days. After those days, the police took my photo and made me sign a statement. They also took down all my records and background history and finally I was released.

The second time was on November 11, 1998. All the villagers from my village, Daw Phu, were rounded up by the troops from LIB 530. There were about 30 soldiers that time. All the villagers were put in the primary school in the village. The soldiers selected 27 male villagers and set them apart. Women, children and elders were kept in the primary school for one week. All 27 men were put onto the truck at night and taken to Daw Law Ku village. Many more villagers were collected on the way and then taken to LIB 54 in Loikaw. We were detained in barracks as soon as we got there. Nothing was provided for us and the soldiers patrolled outside. We did not dare speak to each other. A meal was given only at 2 p.m. the next day, but it was not enough. At night, three young boys, aged 14-15, were taken out to MI 27 office. When they were brought back, they had bruises and swellings all over their bodies. They later told us that they were accused of supporting the KNPP. Later another two were taken. They were Suu Rei, 19 years old, and Say Rei, 20 years old. This interrogation was applied to all persons under detention. Not a single one escaped. The MI later took eight persons in one group and interrogated them. During the daytime, people in the barracks were tied up with ropes. At night the MI took the people and interrogated them throughout the night. They sent the people back to the barracks the next morning. Some people were transferred to the police lock-up or the MI office after the interrogation. Some were repeatedly tortured and asked questions. Some were tortured three times. I was interrogated only once. The MI, three persons in a group, asked about my connections with the KNPP and tried to force me to confess. Actually, I did not have any information and I said I was an ordinary civilian. They beat me with canes, sticks, wooden rods and kicked me with their boots. Some punched me with their bare fists on my face. Blood came out from my mouth and nose. This beating went on for the whole night. They did not get satisfactory answers from me because I did not know anything about their questions. After that I was taken back to the barracks.

We spent one month and four days in the barracks. Two meals per day, each with small amounts of rice, were given per day. Water was given as well. Every day, once in the morning and once in the evening, we were taken out to go to the toilet and the soldiers let us go in to the bushes. We were allowed to take a bath only after twenty days. Some became ill. Many could not move well due to the torture they received during the interrogation. Say Rei lost three teeth during the interrogation and everybody had cuts in their mouths.

Later, the MI took photos and recorded all the details about everybody. All 149

people were released except 12. The twelve were sent to Loikaw Prison accused of having contacts with the KNPP group.

When I arrived back in our village, I found out most of the cattle had been stolen by the troops. I did not want to live in fear of more arrests and torture, so I decided to leave my village with five friends. It took me twenty days to get here. The food we brought was not enough. Therefore we begged for food from other villagers. I have never been here before, but those people we found on the journey knew the way. I followed them.

I still have pains in my knees and waist. I think it is because of the torture I received during my arrest. Here it will be better because I can receive medical treatment at the clinic. I don't want to go back now. If I go back, I will be arrested and tortured again for sure.

Interview 57: Relocation, Forced Labor, Refugee

Name	Ooh Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	47
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Roman Catholic
Marital status	Married with five children
Address:	Daw Ei Thaw village, Shadaw township, Karenni
Date of interview:	February , 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

I arrived here on February 1, 1999. I left Shadaw camp because there was no way for us to survive any more. It was very hard to survive due to the strict control exercised by the military in the area.

My village was ordered to relocate to Shadaw in 1996 and later was burnt down. There were ten houses in my village and we all moved to Shadaw. We had to leave all our belongings and land behind when we moved to Shadaw. There were a lot of people who were ordered to move to Shadaw like us. The health situation was so bad. People, mostly children, were sick and died of diarrhea. When you went to the clinic they gave you one tablet or gave you an injection. The medical staff shared one needle with many people.

Living in the relocation site was like being in a labor camp. We were taken as forced laborers any time the military wanted us for many different jobs. Nobody was allowed to go out and work to earn money except on the site or in Shadaw town. People had to be ready for any forced labor demands by the military. I worked as a forced laborer many times since we moved to Shadaw. I will tell you only the recent works I was forced to do.

In June 1998, a group of SPDC soldiers from unknown battalions entered the Shadaw site. We did not know who they were and what they would do next, so we hid. One soldier found me while I was hiding. He pointed his gun at my head. I was so scared so I pushed his gun and ran away. The soldier did not chase after me but after other villagers. I was very lucky because he did not shoot me and he did not chase me.

In November 1998, I had to work on a motor road construction site between Shadaw

and Pon River. We were ordered to provide one person from each household with our own food and work on road construction. No pay was given for this task. Our ward had to go once every week like other wards in the site. If one family was not able to provide its quota, they had to pay a fine. The fine was 150 *kyat* a day. People were so poor and could not pay fines so they sent elders or young children to do the work as demanded. When I went there, I saw many elder people and children who were only 12 years old working on the construction site. Soldiers were guarding the site and monitoring the people's work. They always used bad words with the villagers. Sometimes, I saw them beat the villagers. Usually the soldiers used canes and bamboo sticks to beat people, but they also beat us with their bare fists. They always used bad words as though they did not know how to use polite words while dealing with human beings.

In December another villager and I were ordered to take a letter to Daw Maw Ma village that was three hours walk from Shadaw. There was a military outpost there. When we got there, we were not allowed to return. The soldiers at the outpost ordered us to cut 15 bamboo each for them and to fetch water five times. We had just walked three hours and the soldiers forced us to continue working for them. No pay, of course. It was inhumane. We were released the next day.

Now people in my village have moved out to different places. Some have moved to the Thai border and some have moved to other areas close to Shan State. One or two houses remained in Shadaw after we left.

My whole family came here together with four other households. The total number of persons was 20. It took ten days to get here. Luckily, no one got sick on the way. Now I am staying at my friend's house in Camp 2. I will build my own soon. I want to go back to my village, but not now. I will go back when the military does not mistreat the people.

Interview 58: Relocation, Forced Labor

Name	Soe Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	35
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status	Married with three children
Address:	Taw Paw To village, Shadaw township, Karenni
Date of interview:	February , 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

I arrived here on February 6, 1999 from Shadaw camp. It took me ten days to get here. My whole family and other three friends, altogether eight people left the relocation site. We were starving at the site because we were not allowed to grow food which is the only work we know to make our living. There was no food left for next year and we would definitely die of hunger if we stayed.

The troops from IB 54 sent a letter to our village headman and ordered us to move

the village to Shadaw. It was in the middle of 1996. They threatened that they would burn our fields and the village and kill the people there if we failed to move. When we arrived at Shadaw, we used leaves for roofing and slept on the ground. Many got sick and there was no medical care for us. There was a clinic in the site but it had no medicine. We were not allowed to grow food and the soldiers said they would shoot if someone was found outside of the camp.

The site is a place where soldiers can come and conscript forced laborers or porters any time they wish. For regular portering, the soldiers told the village headmen to provide the number of porters they wanted. The village headman had to arrange to collect people from his village. In January 1998, ten persons from each ward (Shadaw has three wards; north, south and middle ward) were ordered to work as regular porters. The village headman came to my house and told me to go to be porter. He did not know how long it would take, neither did I. I took some food with me and went with the troops who came and picked up the porters the next day. The work started at 8 a.m. that day. I had to carry eight motor shells and other ammunition. We walked to the Pon River and it took two days without taking any rest. Many of my friends were beaten by the soldiers as they were slow to walk. The soldiers beat us with bamboo at the waist. We were released when we got to the Pon River. It was the last time for me to be a porter in 1998, but many people had to work like that several times.

In October, 1998, we were again forced to work at the Shadaw-Pon River motor road. Each household had to send one person for this forced labor. It was twice a month for our village because there was a rotating system. Ten persons in one group were assigned to dig three pits of stone which was 10 x 10 ft wide and 5 ft high, and to carry the stones to the work site. We had to work the whole day, but if we could not finish our quota of pits, we had to come back the next day and work until the assignment was finished. Some families sent children around 12 years old because they did not have other adults or all were sick. This forced labor is still going on. When we worked there, there were about 12 soldiers guarding us. I did not know which battalion they were from. They did not treat us well and did not like it if we took a rest. They forced us back to work. If there were women or children in the groups, it took a longer time to finish the assigned work. So we had to come back and work again. If the ward failed to send its quota of people, the soldiers said we would be harshly punished. I don't understand what "harshly" meant, but we were afraid to receive harsh punishment. It could be anything; killing, torture, arrest.

I did not want to work on forced labor or as a porter. I did not have time to work for my family and was always occupied with unpaid labor. I left with some friends. I only brought rice and a blanket. On the last two days, I did not have any rice left. We only met people from Shadaw and one other place on the way. More than 400 people in our group after three days. Many had malaria and were in pain. Most children got diarrhea and could only walk very slowly. We did not find any village on the western bank of the Salween River. We just saw the burnt villages and fields.

I would die of hunger and excessive work during forced labor if I continued to stay at the relocation site. I think it is better here than in Shadaw. I don't know what to do yet. More people will soon come from Shadaw.

Interview 59: Relocation, Forced Labor

Name	Soe Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	40
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Roman Catholic
Marital status	Widower with five children
Address:	Daw Ei Thaw village, Shadaw township, Karenni
Date of interview:	February , 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

I was from the same village as Soe Reh. We have the same name. So I don't want to repeat the same story but I will add some of my experiences.

When I was in the Shadaw relocation site in October 1998, I was assigned by my village headman to go and work as a porter. Each village was ordered to provide two porters for the troops from Division 55. Altogether ten villagers were supplied to those troops, including me. We were ordered to carry things from Shadaw to Daw Mu Ma village, north of Shadaw, where a military outpost was stationed. It took the whole day for us to carry things like mortar shells and food supplies. We spent one night there and the troops would not let us go back. The next day, we were ordered to carry things to Ko Lel village in the south. I myself carried shells and ammunition while others carried food, rice, cooking oil and condensed milk for the troops. It took two days and nights to get there. After that, we were allowed to go back. We spent one week in all acting as porters. During that time, I was not beaten but one porter was beaten with a flat knife. He said he could no longer carry on walking as he was very tired. He pleaded to let him take a rest. The soldiers did not let him rest and beat him. He was forced to go on walking. I could rest only when the soldiers wanted to rest. Only two meals per day were given, and they were insufficient. Not only was there very little rice, there was no curry except raw tamarinds. My friend once asked for more rice but he was scolded. The soldiers said, "We don't have rice for porters. Eat what you have and don't ask for more. If you ask for more rice, I will give you only my fists." When I got back home, both my shoulders were swelling with pain.

I worked as a forced laborer on the Pon River- Shadaw motor road several times in 1998. At least once a month. At first the work site was only two furlongs away from the site but it got further and further away as the site moved along the road. We had to dig up stones and build the road. Each time, one person from each house was summoned.

Forced labor for military bases was also very common and frequent. Every month, I had to go and work at least two or three times. The order was from IB 54 stationed at Pagoda Hill. The soldiers usually sent an order to the village headman and he then had to arrange to send people. They had to go in the morning and come back in the evening. If there were no men in the family, the women had to go and work as well. They did not give us food, we had to bring our own food. The soldiers scolded us when they found we were taking a rest.

Life at the Shadaw site was all unpaid and forced labor. We could not work in the fields because the troops did not allow us to go more than five miles beyond. I stayed there more than two years and did not want to stay there any more. I would die if we stayed longer there. So I decided to leave. I left with two daughters and one son. I left two sons at the mission boarding school. It was a mission run by Rev. Raymond Doh, a Padaung priest from Loikaw. There are 60 children, mostly orphans, boarding in the school. I had been to the border when I took the cattle to sell in Thailand. We left our site at night because we were afraid the military would find us. Also we did not use the regular route. We met other people when we arrived at the Salween River. Many become sick while traveling.

I don't know what I am going to do next. I am now staying at my friend's house in the camp and receiving food.

Interview 60: Relocation, Forced Labor

Name	Toe Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	26
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation	Farmer
Religion:	Roman Catholic
Marital status	Married with three children
Address:	Daw Le Ku village, Shadaw township, Karenni
Date of interview:	February, 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2 Thailand
Source:	HRDU

I arrived here on February 6, 1999. Before I was forced to move to the Shadaw site, our village had 20 households. The military always came to my village and took whatever they wanted. They also conscripted men for porters. I have myself worked as a porter for them when I was in the village. There were some KNPP troops passing through the village. They asked for some food but never looted the villagers' property.

The whole village was moved to Shadaw. I was in the middle ward. There was a hospital, a monastery, a church and a boarding school in the camp.

I have not worked as a porter after I moved to Shadaw, but many times I have been taken for forced labor for the military. If you don't want to go for that, you have to pay money to the military. It costs 70-100 *kyat* per day for failing to perform labor at the military bases. I was not well when I was in Shadaw site, so I tried to pay as much money as I could instead of working for forced labor. I had worked three times in 1988 because I did not have money to pay the fine. Sometimes, my wife had to go for unpaid labor at the military bases. In November 1998, I went two times for forced labor on the bases. I did not receive any money for that and ate my own food. Each household was ordered to send one person for labor on the military bases in Shadaw without fail. If you did not go, the soldiers would come and ask for money first, and then they would take you by force if you could not afford to pay fine.

My whole family came together here. It took us ten days to get here. My wife had

a new baby two months ago. So she was very weak and tired from the journey. We had to take care and wait for her while traveling. Some people joined us on the way. We crossed the Salween River by raft. We found no military during our journey.

We were provided food and medical care when we arrived at the camp. I heard some of my relatives are in the refugee camps here but I cannot find them yet, but I have found some people from the Shadaw relocation site who left before us. Many people are leaving Shadaw and now only half of population remains there.

Interview 61: Relocation, Forced Labor

Name	Nay Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	35
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Animist
Marital status	Married with two children
Address:	Daw Say village, Shadaw township, Karenni
Date of interview:	February, 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

My village was eight miles far from Shadaw town before it was ordered to relocate. Once in the relocation site in Shadaw, people were used as forced laborers and did not have enough food to live. I heard people were leaving for the border so I left as well. I came with my wife and two children. It took several days to get here. My youngest son is only 11 months old. My wife, myself and my friends carried him in turns. He got ill with diarrhea on the way and we did not have any medicine for him. I ran as quickly as I could to get medication at the camp. I was very depressed and disappointed because my son was sick during the journey. I wondered when all these miseries would end for us. I felt better after getting here. My son is still receiving medication. My wife is also not feeling well. She also goes to the clinic.

The last time I was taken to be a porter was in early December. People had to go to be a porter or pay a fine if they did not go. The SPDC troops sent a messenger and asked for porters. The number of porters needed was not always the same. Sometimes they asked for ten and sometimes they asked for 15 persons at one time. The village headman was responsible for arranging and collecting the required number of porters. If he was not able to collect the number, the military said they would come and take the people away. We all understood that it would be worse if they came. So we always tried to provide the number required. Nobody dare not go. In December I was among the ten villagers who were forced to carry food for the military. We were ordered to carry food from Shadaw to the Pon River and then come back to Shadaw. I did not know the number of the battalion but the troops were from Shadaw. There were 40 soldiers in the columns led by captain. There was no mistreatment but the work was very tiresome. We left early in the morning and walked the whole day and night. We were very lucky because we worked for only two days. Others

spent one week or more at their tasks..

I have also performed forced labor throughout 1998. I worked on the motor road construction project between the Pagoda Hill, where the military are stationed, and Loikaw. Each household from the relocation site was ordered to provide one person each for this motor road construction. The troops threatened that those who failed to come for work would be imprisoned. So we worked without fail. We were ordered to repair the road, clear the grass and lay down the stones. All three wards from Shadaw site had to send the people so there were many people working there. Each ward was assigned to work at the designated site. Each work site was about two miles wide. The military were guarding people while they were working. The soldiers said we could not go back home unless we finished our assignment. We had to work very hard to finish.

I feel better since I got here. My kids can receive medical care here and I do not have to worry about forced labor and portering. But I want to go back if there is no military near my village.

Interview 62: Relocation, Forced Labor, Livelihood, Refugee

Name	Say Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	25
Ethnicity:	Karenni
Occupation:	Farmer
Religion:	Animist
Marital status	Married with two children
Address:	O Klela village, Shadaw township, Karenni
Date of interview:	February, 1999
Place of interview:	Karenni camp 2, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

I arrived here on January 16, 1999. I spent six days getting here. In 1996, our village was ordered to relocate to Shadaw. We did not want to move because it was far away and difficult to earn a living there. All eighteen households in the village first moved to the place near the Dee Le stream. We brought rice from our barns in the village and hid it in the jungle. We could survive with that rice for a year. But when all the rice we hid was finished, it was very difficult for us to find food. We ate bamboo roots instead of rice for a long time. Some people moved to the Karenni-Shan area. Only five households were left at the site near the Dee Le Stream. We built small huts in the jungle and lived there. When we heard the news of a military presence, we went hiding in the deep jungle out of fear. I could not live in peace and was always afraid. The SPDC troops would kill us if they found we had not moved to Shadaw as they ordered and were hiding in the jungle. When they found our huts while we were hiding, they destroyed them and took everything in the huts. That happened three or four times in 1997.

We cultivated rice on the land for our survival. We did not dare plant a big area in one place because we were afraid the military would find the farm and destroy them all. So we had small plots in different places. In October, 1998, about one hundred soldiers from

an unknown unit came to the area where we were hiding. We ran away and hid in the deep gullies for the whole day and night. I heard them coming and destroying our huts. We did not dare go and look at what they were doing. As there were some children with us, we were so scared the troops would find us. So we stayed in the gullies until they went back. When we returned to our huts, we found they all were burnt down, as well as our rice.

The nearest village to the Dee Le Stream was one day's walk from the site where we were hiding. It was in the Kadu Gyi village tract in southern Shan State. We sometimes went to that village and bought some food. For the last three years, we only survived with hill paddy and bamboo roots.

Many people became sick while hiding in the jungle. Five people out of 23 people from the five households died in the last two years. Most died of malaria and diarrhea. My son died of diarrhea last year when he was only three years old. We could do nothing because we did not have any medicine. We just watched and cried while he was dying. One boy named Mee Reh, 12 years old, died of weakness. We had to keep as fit as we could because we did not have medicine to treat illness.

There was no security while hiding in the jungle. As the area we were hiding in was between the Shan and Karenni area, there were many military activities in both areas. We always lived in fear.

We met some people while we were hunting. We asked them where they were going. They told us they were leaving for the border. We also wanted to go, so we joined them. None of us wanted to live in fear and suffer starvation.

SLECTED SLORC/SPDC ORDERS

The following are the direct translations of some written orders sent from SLORC army units to villages. These orders include demands for forced labor on roads and at army camps, extortion money, food, building materials, and intelligence. For every order reproduced here, hundreds more are issued every week; these should be seen only as a small representative sampling. Most of the orders are address to Chairman and Secretaries of Village Peace and Development Council (Village PDC) and from the Township Peace and Development Council (Township PDC). These are local levels of SPDC administration. A “village tract” includes all the villages in sub-area of the township. While the Township PDC consists of SPDC officials under direct military control, the Village PDC members are appointed, often against their will, by the local military. They are responsible for providing forced labors, money, materials, intelligence, etc. as demanded by the military and the Township PDC, and they are the first to be arrested and tortured if they fail to do so. These orders show the systematic, widespread, and consistent nature of SLORC abuse throughout all rural areas of the country. Most of these orders were typed, copied and sent to villages throughout the township. Where necessary for safety, details have been blanked out with ‘xxx’ or ‘yyy’.

Order (1)

Stamp:

Democratic Buddhist Karen Army

Come together with the former porters by the name of xxxxx, xxxxx, xxxxx, xxxxx, xxxxx and xxxxx, as soon as you receive this letter without fail.

Action will be taken against you if you fail to comply with this order. That is all. Bring one saw mill owner as well.

[sd.]

Saw Thaung Ngwe

Deputy Battalion Commander

No. 999 Brigade

Division 4, DKBA

Order (2)

Stamp
LIB. 230
Military Command Department
Date: May 2, 1998

To
Chairman
Xxxxx village

Move out your village within next two days. If you fail, we will assumed any village left as an insurgent and shoot any time. We will also burn the whole village.

[sd.]
Intelligence officer
LIB. 230

Order (3)

Township Peace and Development Council
Pa-an town
Letter No. 5/3-5/Oo 6
Date: May 7, 1998

To
Chairman
Ward/village PDC
_____ ward/village
Pa-an township

Subject: Registration of your cultivated land
Ref: District PDC's letter No. 5/3-21/Oo 5 dated April 10, 1998

According to the above-mentioned letter, we have been ordered to clarify the registration of your cultivated land in the ward and village respectively. The order assigned the clerks, managers of the agricultural department, and chairmen of the ward/village PDC to check the registration of the people.

You are therefore assigned to prepare the registration of the cultivated land in your ward/village in order to facilitate the checks by the district PDC members.

(for) Chairman
Kyaw Moe
Secretary

Copies:

Chairman, State PDC

Chairman, district PDC

Manager, Township Agricultural Department, Pa-an town

Director-general, Township Land Survey Department, Pa-an town

Office copy

Order (4)

stamp:

Peace and Development Council

xxxx village

Date: June 1, 1998

To

Villager headman

Xxxxxx village

Subject: To provide bullock-cart

According to the above reference, in order to implement the order by the Township PDC and the military column (12), provide one bullock-cart from your village at 4 p.m. without failure. Bring your own food and supplies.

Not: This is an important and urgent message to comply with.

Do not fail to come at 4 p.m. on Monday (June 1, 1998). We will not take any responsibility if you fail and punishment is then taken by the military. Every village has to provide one bullock-cart each.

Chairman

PDC

xxxxx, Kawkareik township

Order (5)

Township Peace and Development Council

Pa-an town

Letter No. 5/3-5/ Oo 6/6

Date: June 11, 1998

To

Chairman

_____ village

Subject: Duty assignment for the rainy season paddy cultivation

1. Regarding the above-mentioned matter, Pa-an township has been assigned by the authorities to cultivate 97,945 acres of paddy during the 1998-1999 rainy season. In addition to reaching the assigned quota, it needs to work to exploit virgin land and to increase the production of paddy per acre.

2. Every ward and village is obliged to cultivate the quota rate of production per acre as given below:

	Acres	rate of production	baskets
Total of rainy season paddy	1,738	41.80	72,662
(1) 100 baskets rate	-	-	-
(2) 75 baskets rate	140	75.00	10,500
(3) 50 baskets rate	331	50.00	16,550
(4) 36 baskets rate	1,267	36.00	45,612

3. You are required to report the situation of cultivated land in your ward/village track to the concerned officials from Agricultural Department and Land Survey Department every 15 days.

[sd.]

Chairman

Copies:

- (1) State PDC, Karen State, Pa-an town
- (2) District PDC, Pa-an district, Pa-an town
- (3) Township Manager, Myanma Agricultural Department, Pa-an town
- (4) Township Manager, Land Survey Department, Pa-an town
- (5) Office copy

Order (6)

Township Peace and Development Council

Pa-an town

Letter No. 5/3-5/ Oo 6/—

Date: June 15, 1998

To

Chairman

Village PDC

(xxxxxxx, xxxxxxx, xxxxxxx, xxxxxxx, xxxxxxx) village track

Pa-an township

Subject: The meeting

Regarding the above-mentioned matter, the Township PDC chairman and team want to meet with you on June 19, 1998 in order to discuss a matter relating to the sufficient production of paddy in the region. You must be ready for the meeting at the xxxxxxxx primary school at 08:30 a.m. on that date, under the arrangements concerning the village PDC.

Note: All village PDC members are required to attend the meeting. At least 100 farmers are also required to attend.

[sd.]
for
Chairman
Kyaw Moe
Secretary

Copies:
Chairman, State PDC, Karen State, Pa-an town
Chairman, District PDC, Pa-an town
Office copy

Ko Kyaw/ 15.6.98

Order (7)

Stamp:
Myanma Police Force
Pa-an district, Thaya Gone Police check-point

To

_____ Village Chairman

Subject: Invitation to meeting

Regarding the above-mentioned matter, the Chairman and Secretary must come without fail to attend the meeting at 11:00 a.m. at the Thaya Gone Police check-point on June 16, 1998. This meeting is in preparation for the meeting with the State PDC chairman and his team at Thaya Gone primary school on June 19, 1998.

[sd.]
Ngwe Htun
Sub-inspector of police
In-charge of check-point
Pa-an township, Thaya Gone police check-point
Date. June 6, 1998

Order (8)

Township Peace and Development Council

Pa-an town

Letter No. 5/3-11/ Oo 6

Date: June 24, 1998

To

Chairman

Village PDC

(xxxxxxx, xxxxxxx, xxxxxxx, xxxxxxx) village

Pa-an township

Subject: To have the village PDC members on stand-by

The township PDC chairman and his team will come and visit Kan Kaye village on June 25, 1998 to discuss matters relating to the rainy season paddy cultivation and building the Kan Kaye dam. This is to inform you to have all village PDC members ready and on stand-by at the Kan Kaye village PDC office at noon on that date.

[sd.]

(for) Chairman

Kaung Myat

Assitant township officer

Copy:

Office

Order (9)

Stamp:

Democratic Karen Buddhist Army

Date: June 17, 1998

To

Chairman

xxxxxx village track

Request for assistance

Regarding for above-mentioned matter, we require your village track to provide ——— lengths of bamboo for building a fence at our DKBA Brigade (999), Division (4) and for the use of our family members.

Note:

- (1) Your village has 350 households.
- (2) Each household is required to provide 25 bamboo lengths 2.5 yards long.
- (3) This is for building a fence.
- (4) For an other purpose, each household is required to provide another 25 bamboo lengths 2.5 yards long and one long bamboo.
- (5) The bamboo must be sent by July 20, 1998 to the battalion at Naung Lon.

[Sd.]

Saw Ohn Mya
Adjutant
Battalion 4
DKBA

Order (10)

Stamp:

LIB 284

Column 2, Headquarters

Date. July 19, 1998

To

Chairman

xxxxxx village

All fishermen fishing in the Win Yaw River must come and see me at 1:00 p.m. on July 2 with list of other fishermen at Column Headquarters.

[sd.]

Column Commander

No.2 Column

LIB 284

Order (11)

Stamp: DKBA

Date: 29.8.98

To

Elder xxxxxx

This is to inform you to immediately collect 17,500 *kyat* from U xxxxxxxx and 10,000 *kyat* from U xxxxxx in your village and bring the money to the camp. This is ordered by the commander, and must be complied with without fail.

Do without fail.

[sd.]

Captain

Htun Aung

29.8.98

———— Mobile column

Order (12)

Stamp:

LIB. 106

Battalion Office

LIB.106

xxxxx village

Letter 106/52/ Ye 2

Date: September 8, 1998

To

Chairman

Xxxxxx village PDC

Subject: To provide fish and meat for the family members of battalion

Ref: Order 2000/4/ Ye 2 dated August 31, 1998 by Southeast Military Command

Regional Military Command has ordered our battalion to provide free fish and meat to the family members of battalion twice a month, according to the above reference letter.

Our battalion is having a difficulty to provide free fish and meat twice a month, as ordered by the command. We want you to provide one time of fish and meat for our family members.

We will not accept cash but you have to provide 15 viss of pork in every month. Give it on September 15, 1998 and you are required to provide every three month the same amount of meat on every 15th day of month.

[sd]

(for) Battalion Command

LIB. 106

Order (13)

Stamp: DKBA

September 10, 1998

To
Chairman
Xxxxxx village

Ref: Meeting to discuss matters concerning paddy purchasing

In order to discuss the matter of paddy purchasing, you are required to attend a meeting at 12:00 noon in xxxxxxxx village on September 11 (tomorrow) without fail.

Note:

Matters relating to xxxxxxxx 's daughter will be also discussed

Bring the headmen from

- (1) xxxxxxxx village
- (2) xxxxxxxx village
- (3) xxxxxxxx village
- (4) xxxxxxxx village

[sd.]

Captain
Htun Aung
September 10, 1998
Battalion (4), Division (3)
999 Brigade

Order (14)

Stamp:
Frontline IB. 206
Column 2

To
Chairman
xxxxxxx village

Date: September 23, 1998

Bring all the propaganda documents and tapes of the KNU today yourselves without fail to xxxxxxxxxx.

You will be held responsible if you fail to do as ordered.

[sd.]

Commander of column
Front IB 206, Column 2

Order (15)

Stamp:

IB 231

Column #1

To:

Village Head

xxxx village

From your village, children, men and all the villagers are absolutely (absolutely) not allowed out of the village on September 27 / 28 / 29, Thadin Kyut Hla Zan [waxing] 7 / 8 / 9. Don't go at all for looking after your cattle, buffaloes, farm affairs or picking vegetables. Inform the village that they will be shot and arrested if the Columns find out [*that they are going out of the village*].

Place: Temporary - Mobile [camp]

Date: September 26, 1998

[Sd.]

Intelligence Officer

IB 231

[Thadin Kyut is a month in the Burmese lunar calendar, so Thadin Kyut waxing 7 / 8 / 9 is the Burmese date to correspond with September 27 / 28 / 29. This order was probably issued because of some military operation which was to happen around the village on those days.]

Order (16)

Stamp:

Myanma Police Force

Pa-an township, Thaya Gone Police check-point

Date: September 30, 1998

Chairman

xxxxxxx village track

Ref: Invitation to meeting

Your village tracks are ordered to form a Karen traditional "don" dance troupe and compete in the Karen State Day competition. In order to discuss matters related to that, please come and meet U xxxxxxx, secretary of township PDC, at the residence of xxxxxxx village chairman. The meeting is at 10:00 a.m. on the October 2, 1998.

[sd.]
 Ngwe Htun
 Sub-inspector of Police
 In-charge of police check-point
 Pa-an township, Thaya Gone police check-point

Order (17)

To
 Chairman
 xxxxxxxx village
 Date: October 2, 1998

Ref: Second warning for reporting

The above-mentioned chairman is ordered for the second time to come immediately and report as soon as he receives this letter. You will be entirely responsible for the consequences if you fail to report this time.

[sd.]
 Battalion commander
 No. 1 Division
 IB 206

Order (18)

Stamp:
 Karen State Police Force
 Eindu Police check-point

Chairman
 Village PDC
 Date: October 8, 1998

Ref: Matter of purchasing paddy

In order to discuss the purchasing of paddy, come without fail to the Aindu police check-point at 10 a.m. on October 10, 1998.

[sd.]
 In-charge of police check-point
 Einda police check- point
 Pa-an township Police Force

Order (19)

Stamp: LIB. 248
Intelligence Department

To
Chairman
Xxxxx village
Date: October 15, 1998

Subject: Provide horses and porters

Regarding the above subject, bring for horses and ten persons from your village at 7 p.m.

[sd.]
(for) Battalion commander
LIB.248

Order (20)

Stamp:
IB 231
Column 1

To:
Village headwoman
xxx [village]

Date. October 15, 1998

You are informed to send again 5 voluntary servants and 5 emergency servants from your village to xxx riverbank today.

[Sd.]
(for) Intelligence Officer
IB 231

[Emergency servants' are forced labourers for one-time 'ad hoc' work, usually as porters hauling shipments of Army rations or maintaining the Army camp. 'Voluntary labourers' are also forced labourers, but in this context he is probably referring to the regular rotations of forced labourers which the village is ordered to provide.]

Order (21)

Date: October 18, 1998

To
Chairman
—— village

Ref: Emergency summons to the chairman and secretary

Regarding this matter, come immediately and report as soon as you get this letter without fail to discuss a very important issue. Report us not later than 09:00 a.m. on October 19, 1998.

P.S. Prepare and bring a list of villagers, their occupations and the number of households in your village.

[sd.]
Division Commander
Division (1)
IB 206

Order (22)

Stamp:
Frontline IB 206
Column Headquarters

To
Chairman
Xxxxxx village

Date: October 27, 1998

Collect three porters and take them yourselves to the column commander at Win Yaw Seik Kyi by 8:00 p.m. tonight.

[sd.]
Column Commander
Frontline IB 206

Order (23)

Stamp:
LIB 284

Column (1) Headquarters

Frontline IB 284

Xxxxxx village

Letter No. 284/7/Oo 1

Date: October 29, 1998

Ref: Discussion about porters

Regarding this matter, come and meet me at 12:00 noon on October 29 to discuss the question of portage.

[sd.]

(for) Battalion Commander

Frontline LIB 284

Order (24)

Date: November 5, 1998

To

Chairman

Xxxxxxx

Come with this messenger along with five laborers and two viss of meat to Win Sein village at 2:00 p.m.

Note. Make sure you do not fail to appear.

[sd.]

IB 110

Order (25)

Stamp:

Karen State Police Force

Ein Du Police check-point

To

Chairman

Xxxxxx village

Date: November 20, 1998

Ref: Calling for a meeting

In order to discuss matters relating to the purchase of your quota of paddy with the Township

Paddy Purchasing Team, bring all the paddy mill owners in your village as well as all village PDC members (without fail) to Ein Da village PDC's office at 12:00 noon on November 21, 1998.

[sd.]

Police check-point commander
Ein Du police check-point
Pa-an township Police Force

Order (26)

Stamp:

Village Peace & Development Council
Xxxx village
November 20, 1998

To: Xxxxx village head, you are informed to send without fail 500 wooden planks, length 10 *taun* [*cubits; 10 taun is about 5 meters / 15 feet*], which must arrive on 22-11-98 for A'Su Chaung bridge.

[Sd.]

Chairman
Village Peace & Development Council
xxxx village, Bilin township

Arrange *loh ah pay* workers on the day of construction.

['Loh ah pay' is the term for traditional voluntary merit-making labour, but is used by the SPDC to refer to forced labour. Note that they only have 2 days to cut and deliver all 500 planks. Not only are the villages being ordered to provide the planks for the bridge, but they also have to build it, and they were probably also ordered to pay for it.]

Order (27)

Stamp:

DKBA
Date: November 26, 1998

To
Chairman
Ward PDC
Xxxxxx village track

Assistance required

Regarding this matter, we request your village track to provide 800 thatch for the use of family members from Brigade (999), to be brought to the Naung Lon DKBA office on January 1, 1999.

[sd.]

Captain Saw Ohn Mya
Brigade (999) Division .4
D.K.B.A
Naung Lon

Order (28)

Stamp:
DKBA

Date: November 26, 1998

To
Chairman
Xxxxxx village track

Celebration of New Year

Regarding this matter, collect 20 *kyat* from each household in your village track to contribute to the celebration of New Year and bring the money to DKBA Naung Lon camp on December 12, 1998.

[sd.]

Captain Saw Ohn Mya
Supply Office
No.999, Division 4
DKBA

Order (29)

Stamp:
DKBA

Date: November 27, 1998

To
Chairman
Xxxxxx village track

Assistance for New Year celebrations

Regarding this matter, the DKBA will hold a special New Year celebration at Myaing Gyi Ngu. Collect 100 *kyat* from each household in your village track and bring the money to Naung Long DKBA camp on December 1, 1998.

Note: Comply with this order as it is written.

[sd.]

Captain Saw Ohm Mya
Supply Officer
No. 999 Brigade, Division 4
DKBA

Order (30)

Stamp:

LIB 284

Column (1) Headquarters

Date: December 2, 1998

Chairman

xxxxxxx

This is to inform you to come and report to our column at Xxxxxx village at 10:00 a.m. on December 13, 1998 (tomorrow) along with two porters from your village.

Comply without fail.

[sd.]

Captin Myat Thu Aung
Kyee- 29083
Intelligence Officer
LIB 284

Order (31)

Stamp:

LIB 4356, Thingan Nyi Naung

To:

Village Head
Xxxxxx village

Subject: Calling for volunteer workers

U yyy from xxxx village has returned without permission, so you yourself immediately send 15 viss [24 kg/ 52 lb] of pork. Come yourself today with one person to take his place as a volunteer worker. If you cannot get pork, [you] must pay fine money of the value of the pork.

You are informed that the village head and the village will be severely punished if they fail.

Place: xxxx village

Date: December 15, 1998

[Sd.]
(for) Battalion Commander
LIB 356

[This order was issued after a villager doing forced labour left to go home before getting permission from the military. Whenever this happens the village is punished and forced to send replacements.]

Order (32)

Stamp: IB 310

Intelligence

Date: December 20, 1998

Chairman

Xxxxxxx village

Ref: Changing porters for military operations

Bring one porter from your village with his own food for rotating use for frontline IB 310. You must bring him yourself.

[sd.]

Intelligence Officer

Order (33)

Stamp:

IB 36

#3 Company

To let the xxxx [village] chairperson, Daw xxxx, know. Tomorrow morning at 6 o'clock send 3 emergency servants from your village for repairing the camp.

Send [them] without fail to repair the camp. It will be two nights long, so they must bring

rations.

Without fail. If [you] fail it will be the responsibility of the Chairpersons.

Right on time on 8-1-99 to xxxx camp.

[To..] xxxx [village].

Date: January 7, 1999

Place: xxxx camp

[Sd.]

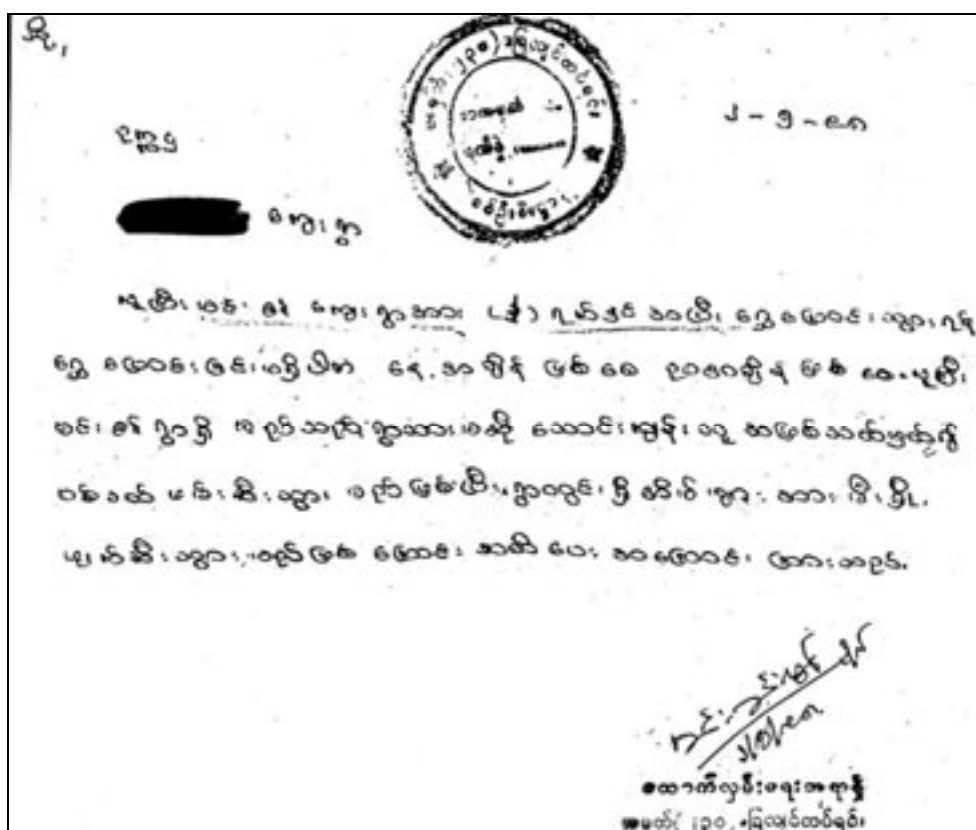
(for) Company Commander

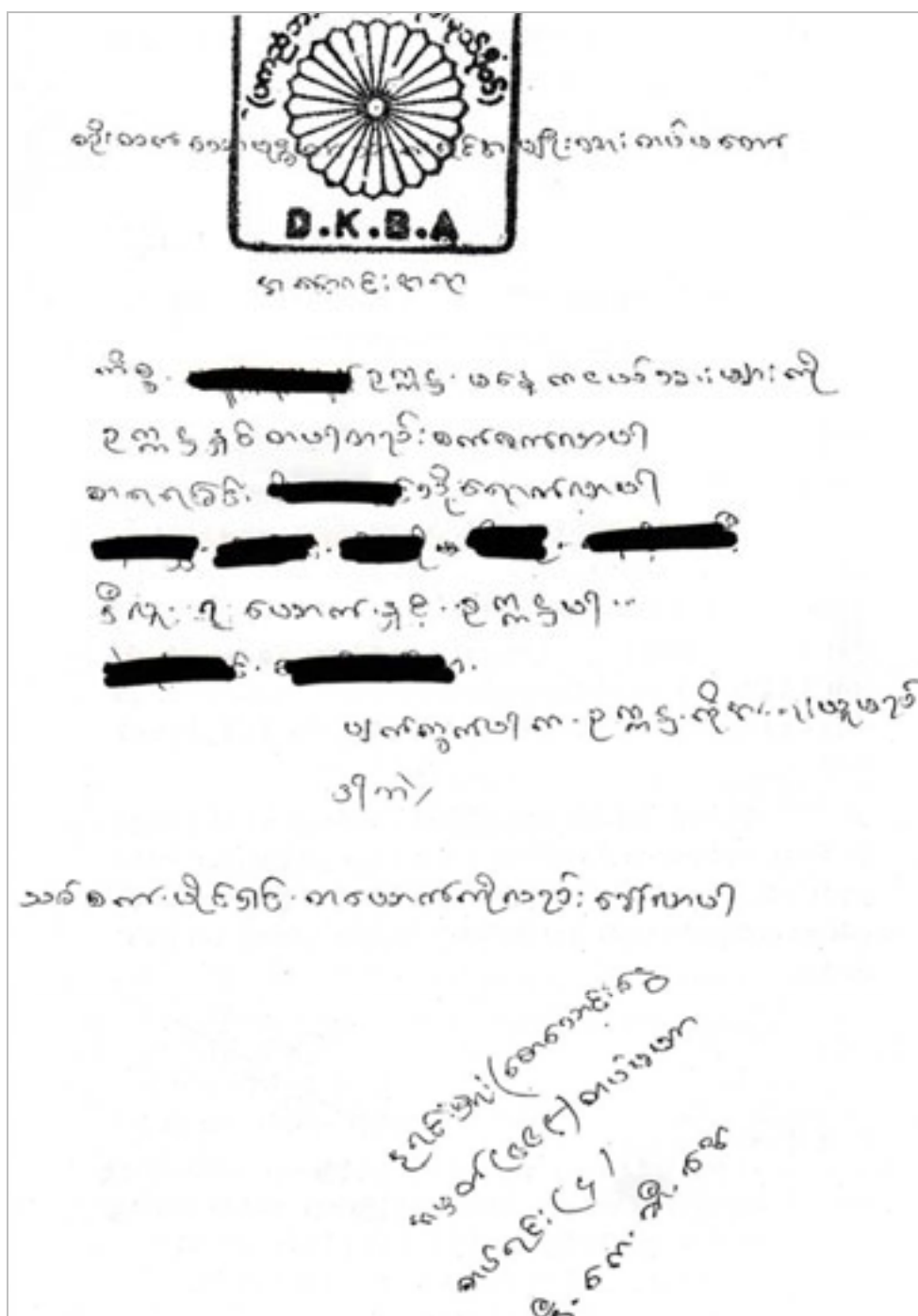
IB 36

#3 Company

[‘Emergency servants’ are villagers to do a one-time shift of forced labour,]

Order (2)



Order (1)

Order (5)

မြို့နယ် အေးဂျမ်းသယာ ရေးနှင့်မြို့ရေးကောင်စီ
ဘေး အံ့ မြို့။

စာအမှတ်: ၁/ ၃-၁ ဦး-၆/ ၁

ရက် ၈၊ ၁၉၉၈ခုနှစ်၊ ဇွန်လ (၁၀) ရက်

အံ့

၁၈၈၆

အကြောင်းအရာ။ မိုးခေါင်းရိုက်ပြီးကုတ်လုပ်မှုရိုက်ပြီး ရေးစီမံကိန်းတာဝန်
ပေးအပ်ခြင်း

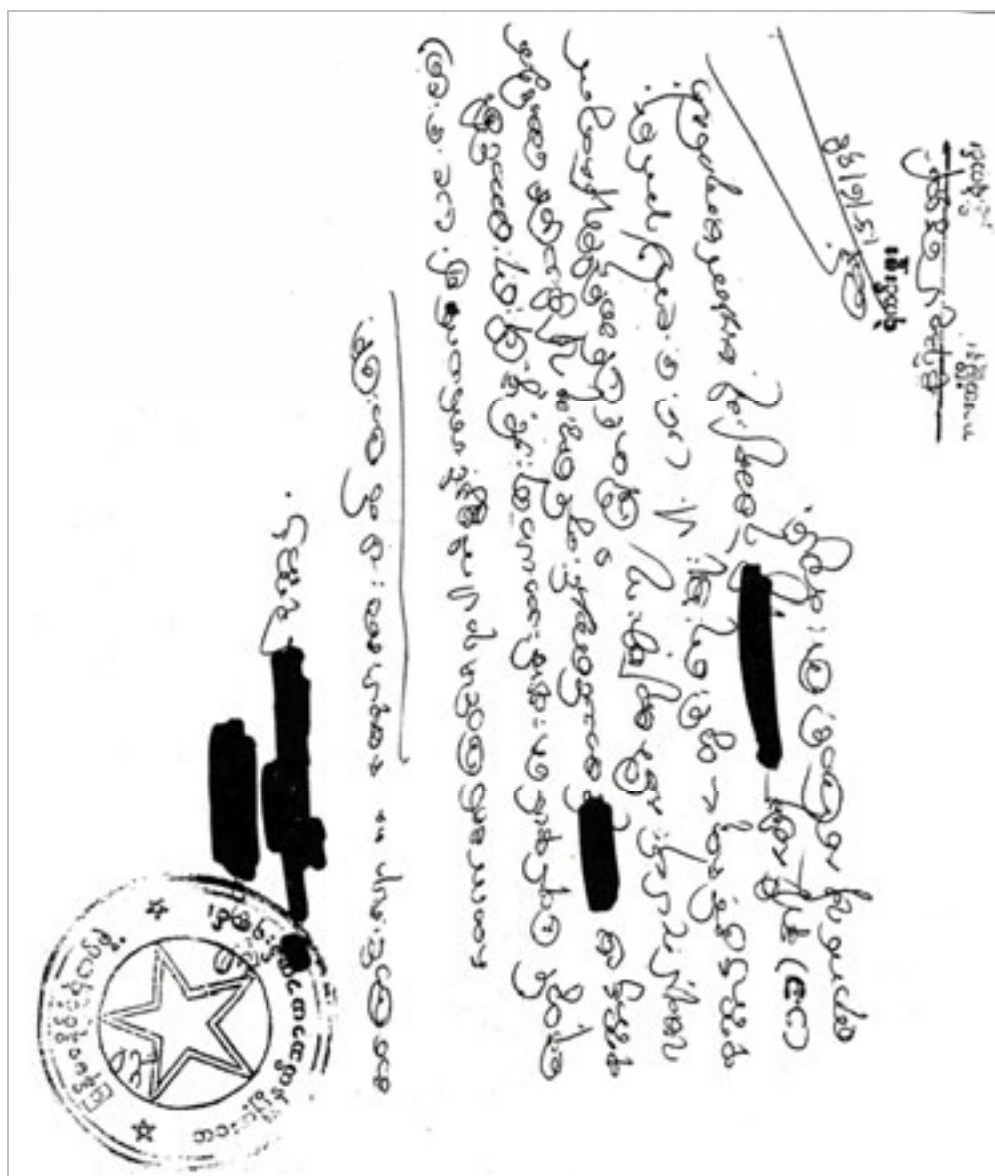
၁။ အတိအကျအကြောင်းအရာပါရှိစွာနှင့်ပတ်သက်၍ဘေးအံ့မြို့နယ်အတွင်း၁၉၉၈-
၉၉၉၉ ခုနှစ်တွင် မိုးခေါင်းရိုက် (၉၉၉၄၅) ကေအိုင်အိုင် ရန်သူကားသတ်မှတ်ပြီးဖြစ်ပါ
သည်။ မိုးခေါင်းရိုက် ပြည်သူ့ကျေးဇူးအောင်ရိုက်ပြီးကုတ်လုပ်သွားမည်ဖြစ်
ပတ်လ် ရေးများ နေထိုင်ရခြင်းနှင့်စေ့စပ်အကူအညီအားတိုးတက်ပြုလုပ်သွား ရေးကိုပါ
အောင်မြင်သွားမည်ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

၂။ မိုးခေါင်းရိုက်/ ကျေးရွာအုပ်စုများတွင် အောက်ဖော်ပြပါမိုးခေါင်းရိုက်
ကိန်းလျာကားရက်များအတိုင်း မိုးခေါင်းရိုက်ပေါင်းစေ့စပ်အကူအညီအားအလိုက်
ရိုက်ကေများကိုမိုးခေါင်းရိုက်နှင့်ရိုက်ပြီးရေးလုပ်ငန်းမှတစ်ဆင့်ပေါင်း (၁၅) တင်း
ကုတ်ပြီးရေးအောင်မြင်ရမည်လုပ်ငန်းများနှင့်အညီရိုက်ပြီးကုတ်လုပ်သွားကြရန်တာ
ဝန်ပေးအပ်လိုက်ပါသည်။

	ရိုက်ကေ	အကူအညီ	အကုတ်တင်း
မိုးခေါင်းရိုက်ပေါင်း	၁၅၃၈	၄၁,၈၀	၂၂၆၅
(၁) ၁၀၀တင်းအား	-	-	-
(၂) ၁၅တင်းအား	၁၄၀	၅၁-၀၀	၁၀၅၀၀
(၃) ၅၀တင်းအား	၃၃၁	၅၀-၀၀	၁၆၅၀၀
(၄) ၃၆တင်းအား	၁၂၆၅	၃၆-၀၀	၅၅၆၀

၃။ အံ့မြို့နယ်ရှိမိုးခေါင်းရိုက်/ ကျေးရွာအုပ်စုအလိုက်မိုးခေါင်းရိုက်ပြီးကုတ်လုပ်မှု
အကြောင်းအရာကိုကျေးရွာအုပ်စုအသီးသီးနှင့်ရိုက်ပြီးရေးလုပ်ငန်းနှင့်ဆက်သွယ်ရင်း
ရွာနေထိုင်မှုတာဝန်ရှိသူများ၏ လာကမ်းရက်နှင့်အဆုတ်စဉ် (၁၅) ရက်တစ်ကြိမ်
အစီရင်ခံစာပြုလုပ်ရန်တာဝန်ပေးအပ်ကြောင်းအကြောင်းကြားပါသည်။

၁၈၈၆

Order (7)

Order (11)



27.8.98

ဦး [REDACTED]

ဦး [REDACTED] (17၈၀) နှင့် ဦး [REDACTED] (၁၀၈၀) အား
 ပြုစုပေးသည့် အားဖြင့် ဦး [REDACTED] နှင့် ဦး [REDACTED] အား
 ဦး [REDACTED] နှင့် ဦး [REDACTED] အား ပြုစုပေးသည့် အားဖြင့်
 ဦး [REDACTED] နှင့် ဦး [REDACTED] အား ပြုစုပေးသည့် အားဖြင့်
 ဦး [REDACTED] နှင့် ဦး [REDACTED] အား ပြုစုပေးသည့် အားဖြင့်

ဦး [REDACTED]

ဦး [REDACTED]

ဦး [REDACTED]

27.8.98

[REDACTED]

Order (12)

ဆို့

ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ

ကျေးဇူးအေး ချမ်းသာယာရေး နှင့် ဖွံ့ဖြိုးရေး
ကော်မတီ

အကြောင်းအရာ : ဆိုင်ဆောင်သည့်ပိသား၊ နမူနာသား / မီး၊ ကျွဲ၊
နွား၊ ရေး

ရည်ရွယ်ချက် : အဝေ့ကောင်ဆိုင်၊ စစ်ဌာနချုပ်ဆိုင် ၃၁-၀-၉၀ ရက်စွဲ
မိခင်အမှတ် ၂၁၁၀/၄/ရေး ၂ ညွှန်း

၁။ ပိတိတင်ရင်း၊ ဆိုင်ဆောင်ပိရည်ညွှန်း၊ ခေမ္မာတင်ရင်း၊ ပိသား၊ နမူနာ
ဆောင်သည့်များ၊ အားလုံးလိပ်စာမိန့်မိတ်ပြောကျေးဇူးတင်ရင်း၊ ပိသား၊ နမူ
နာများ၊ ဖုန်း၊ မိမိ၏ (၁)လူမျိုး (၂)လူမျိုးသား / မီး၊ များ၊ အစားအသွယ် -
ပေး၊ ရန်သူနိဗ္ဗာန်၊ လာဘ်မိသည့်၊

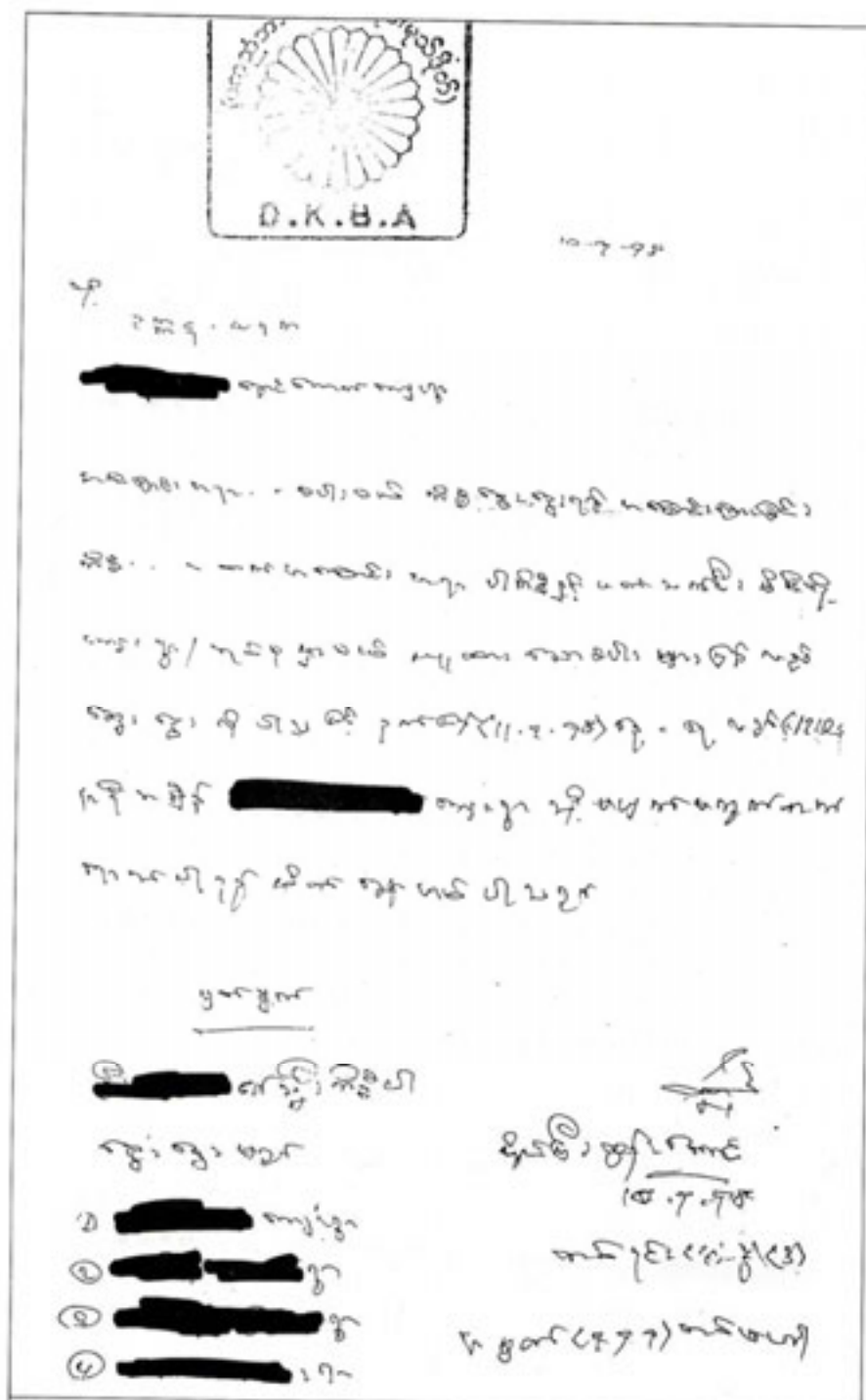
၂။ တင်ရင်း၊ အခေမ္မာ (၁)လူမျိုး (၂)လူမျိုးအစားအသွယ်၊ နိုင်ငံပြုစု
နေထိုင်မှုလုပ်ငန်း၊ ပင်း၊ ဆိုင်ကျေးဇူးတင်များ၊ ဖုန်း (၁)လူမျိုး (၁)လူမျိုး
မိရန် မေ့ဆော့ရန်မိသည့်၊

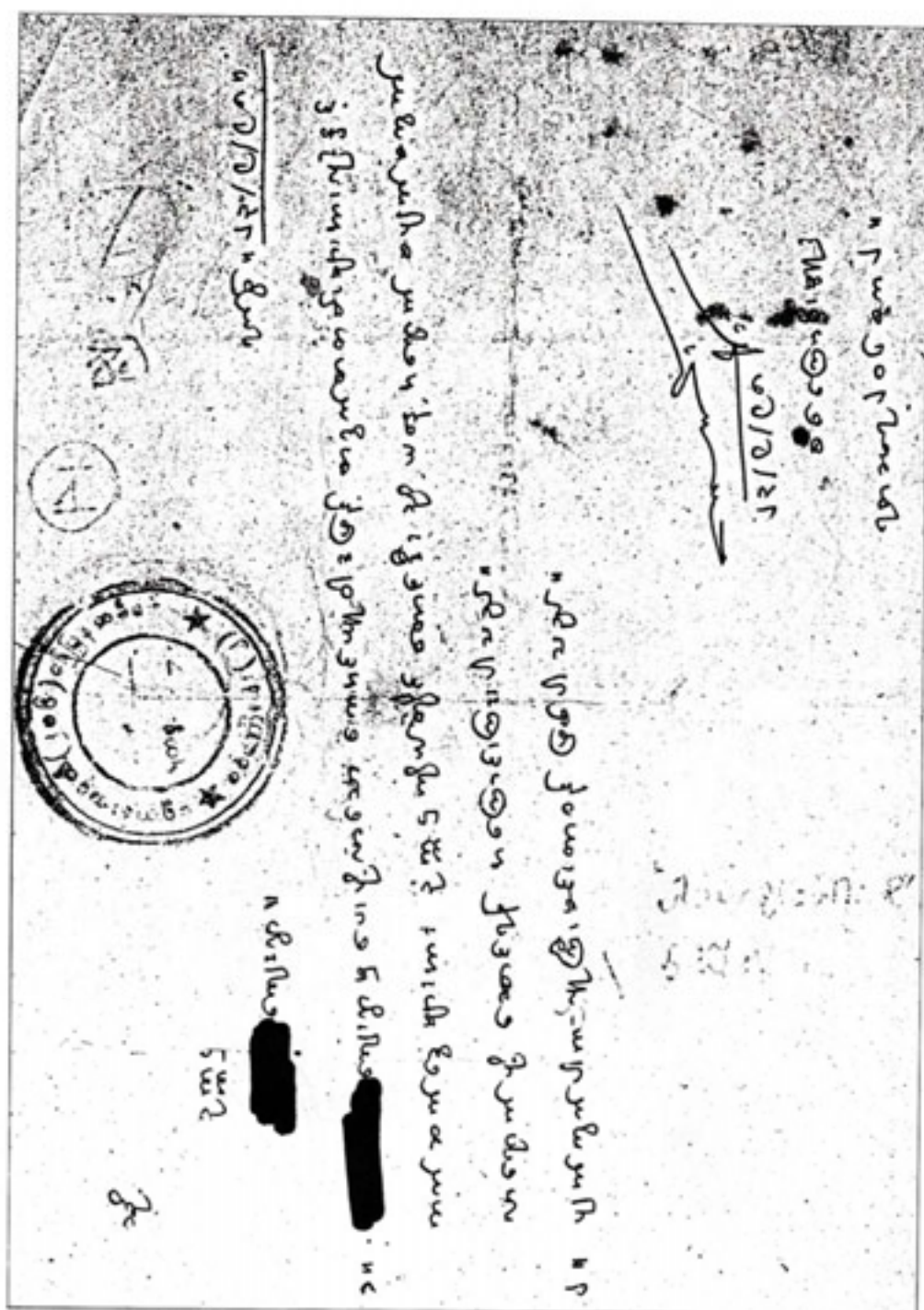
၃။ တင်ရင်း၊ အခေမ္မာ (၁)လူမျိုး (၁)လူမျိုး၊ လူမျိုး၊ ပင်း၊ ဆိုင်ကျေးဇူး
များ၊ ဖုန်း (၁)လူမျိုး (၁)လူမျိုး၊ စီမံအမှု (၁၅-၉-၉၀) ရက်စွဲ
ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ/အမှုဝင်များ၊ ကိုယ်တိုင်လုပ်ငန်း၊ ရောက်၊ ဆိုင်ရန်၊ နှင့် ၄၆၊ အား
ထိုင်း (၃)လက်တိုင်၊ မီး၊ ဆိုင်၊ ရန်သူ၊ ကြားသည့်၊

တင်ရင်း၊ (ကိုယ်မီး)

အမှတ် (၁၀၆) မြေလွှာတင်ရင်း

Order (13)



Order (14)

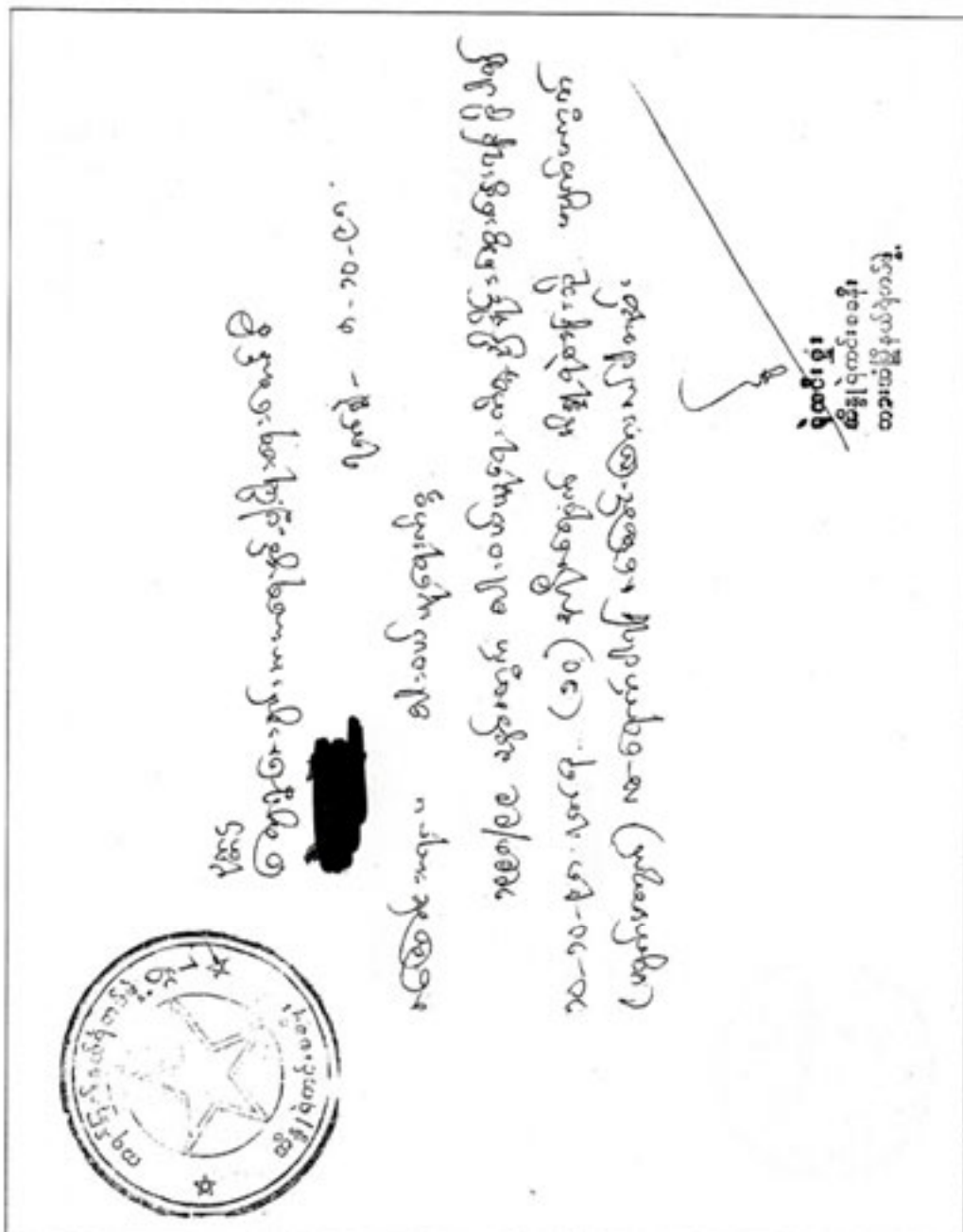
Order (15)



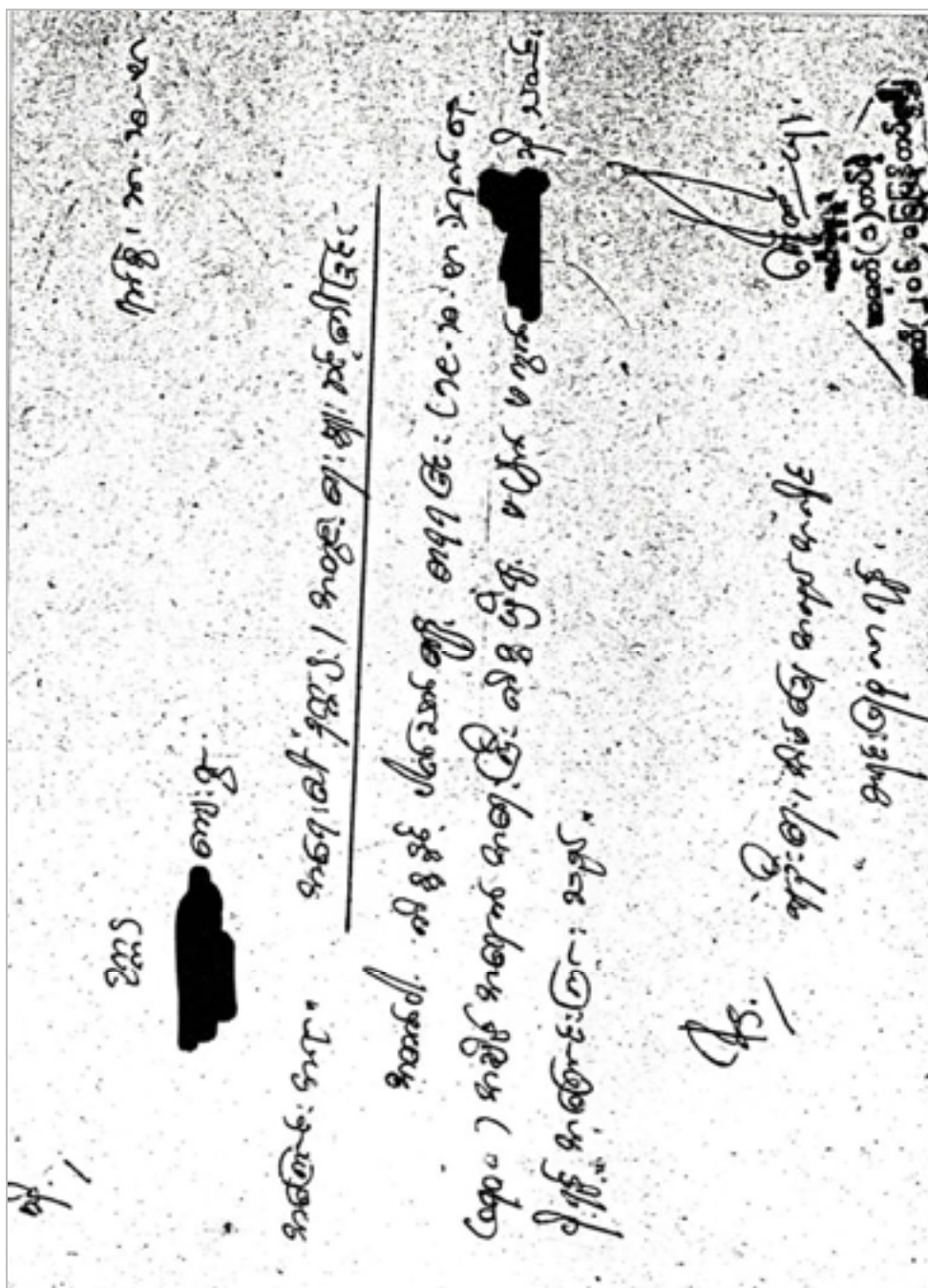
Order (16)

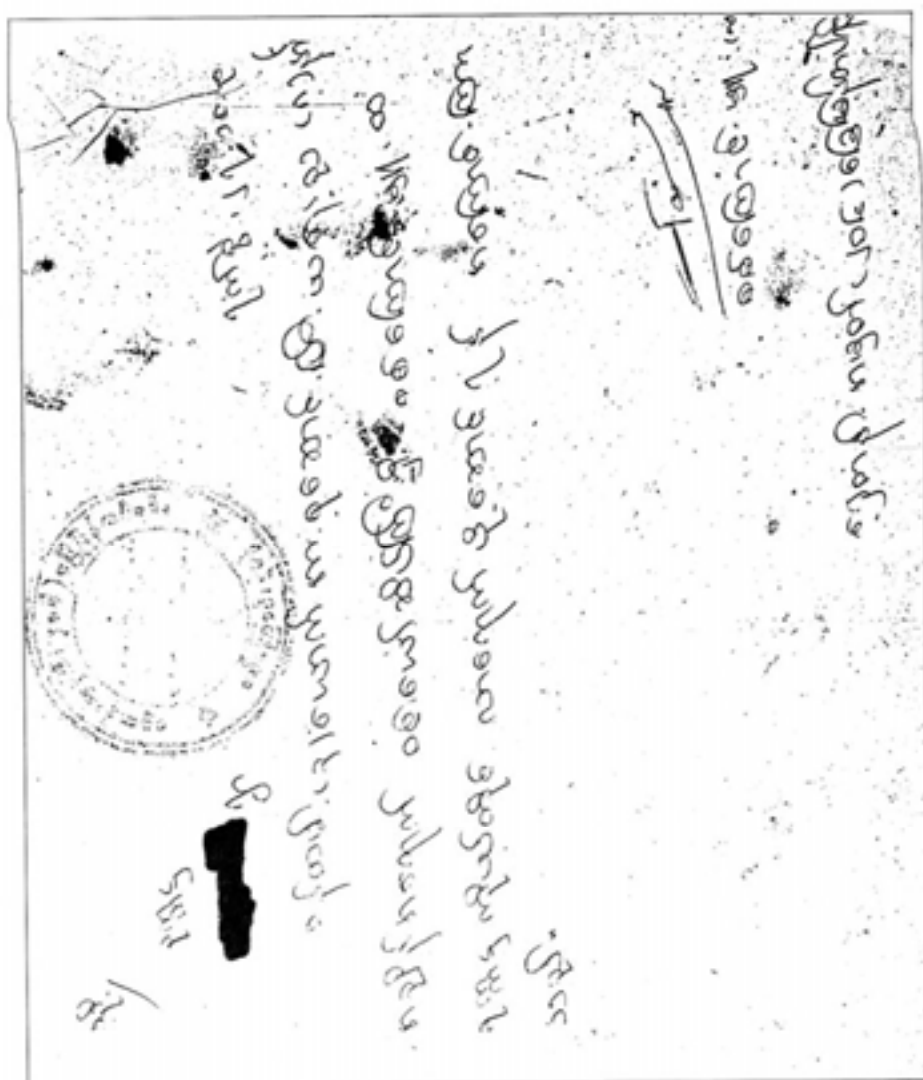


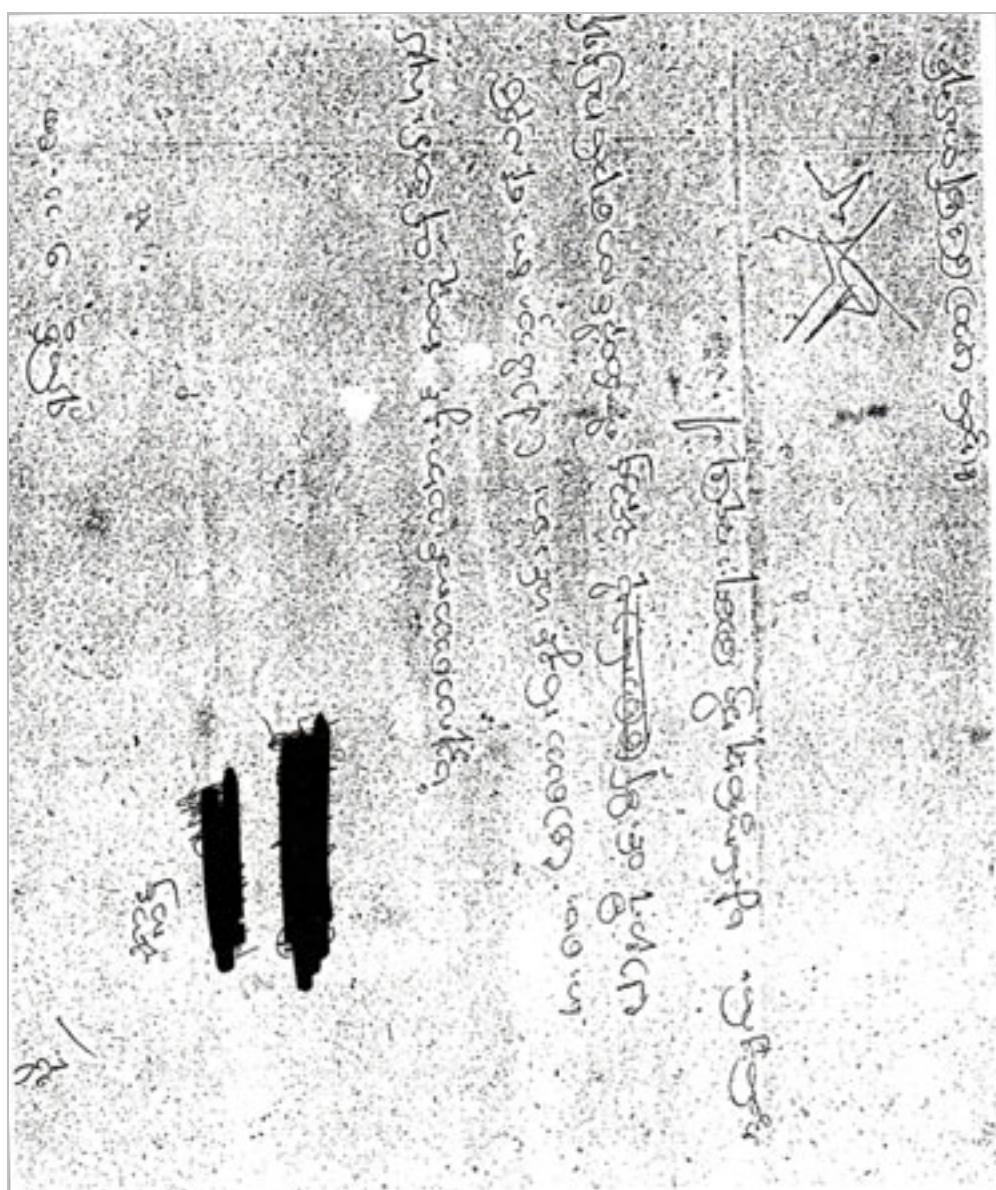
Order (18)

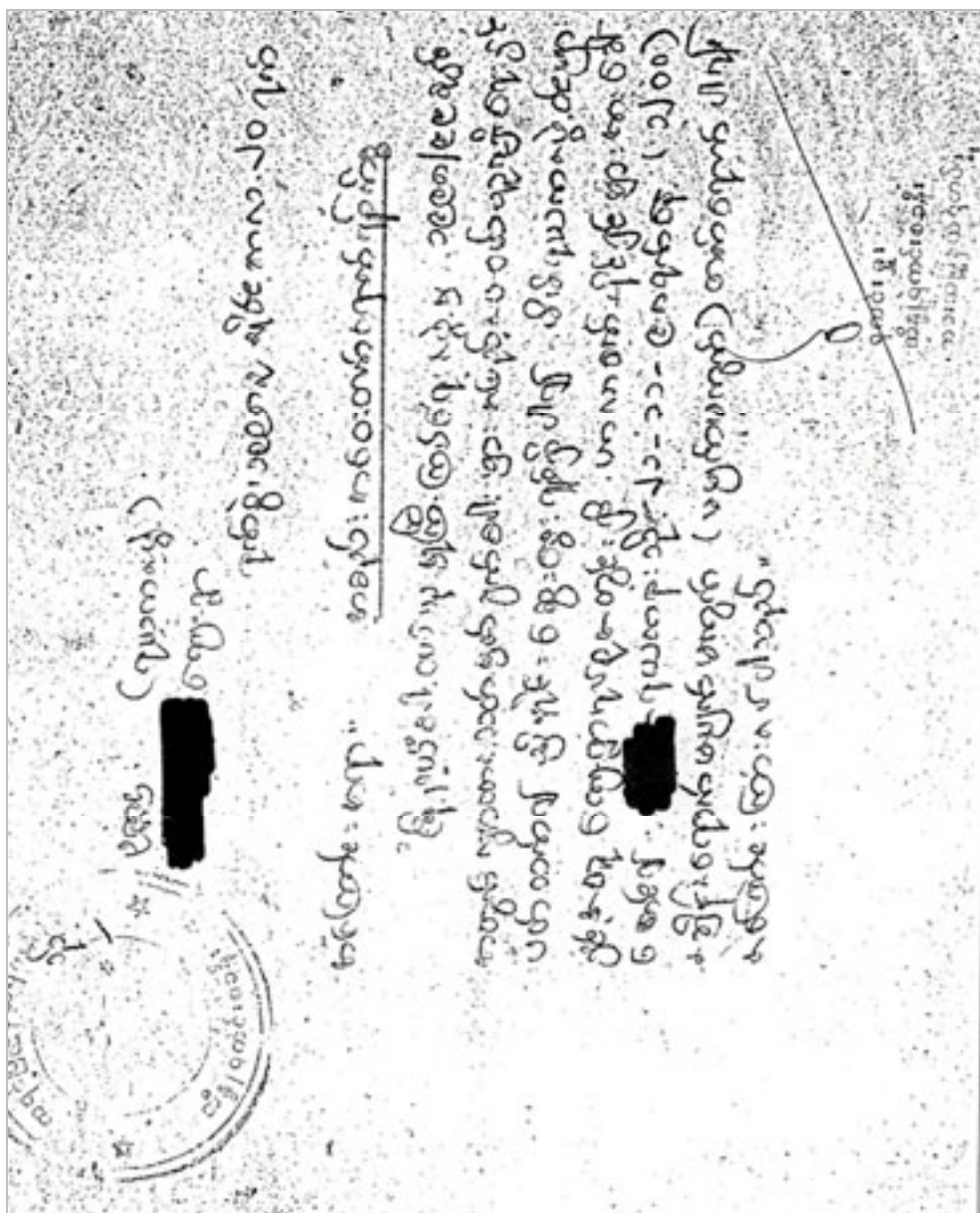


Order (21)



Order (22)

Order (24)

Order (25)

Order (26)


 ၂၀ ၁၁. ၁၈။ Order #T12

ဆေးကုသမှု၊ လူမှုရေး၊ နိုင်ငံရေးနှင့် ပတ်သက်သည့် အခွင့်အရေးများကို
 ဖြေရှင်းပေးရန် ဆောင်ရွက်ရန် (၅၀၀) အောက်ရှိ
 နေရာ (၁၀) အောက်ရှိ ၂၂. ၁၁ နေရာ
 ရှိ နေရာများ ပြန်လည်ရောက်ရှိရန်
 စေလိုပါသည်။ နောက်ဆုံးအား နေရာချသည့်


ဆေးကုသမှု၊ လူမှုရေး၊ နိုင်ငံရေးနှင့် ပတ်သက်သည့် အခွင့်အရေးများကို
 ဖြေရှင်းပေးရန် ဆောင်ရွက်ရန် (၅၀၀) အောက်ရှိ
 နေရာ (၁၀) အောက်ရှိ ၂၂. ၁၁ နေရာ

Order (28)

၇၈၆-၂၀-၁၁-၈၈

၂၆

ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ - (၇၀၁၈)

([REDACTED]) ချေးငွေ အပ်ချက်

ဖြစ်သစ်ကူးလိမ္မော်ကုမ္ပဏီလီမိတက်

အထက်ပါကုမ္ပဏီလီမိတက်၏ ဝန်ထမ်းများသည် ဝန်ထမ်းများ၏

မှ ဖွဲ့စည်းထားသော မြို့တော်လမ်းပေါ်ရှိ အမှတ် ၃၈၆

အမှတ် ၃၈၆ မှ ဝန်ထမ်း (၂၀) ဖွဲ့စည်းထားသော

ဧည့်သည်များ (၁၀-၁၂-၇၈) နှင့် ဦးစီးသည်

အောက်ပါအတိုင်း ဖြစ်ပေါ်ခဲ့သည်

ဦးစီး: [Signature]

အထောက်အကူပြု

အမှတ် (၃၃၃)၇၈-၄-

ဦးစီး - အထောက်အကူပြု

Order (30)

ဥပဒေ

၁၆၆ ၂/၁၁/၉၈

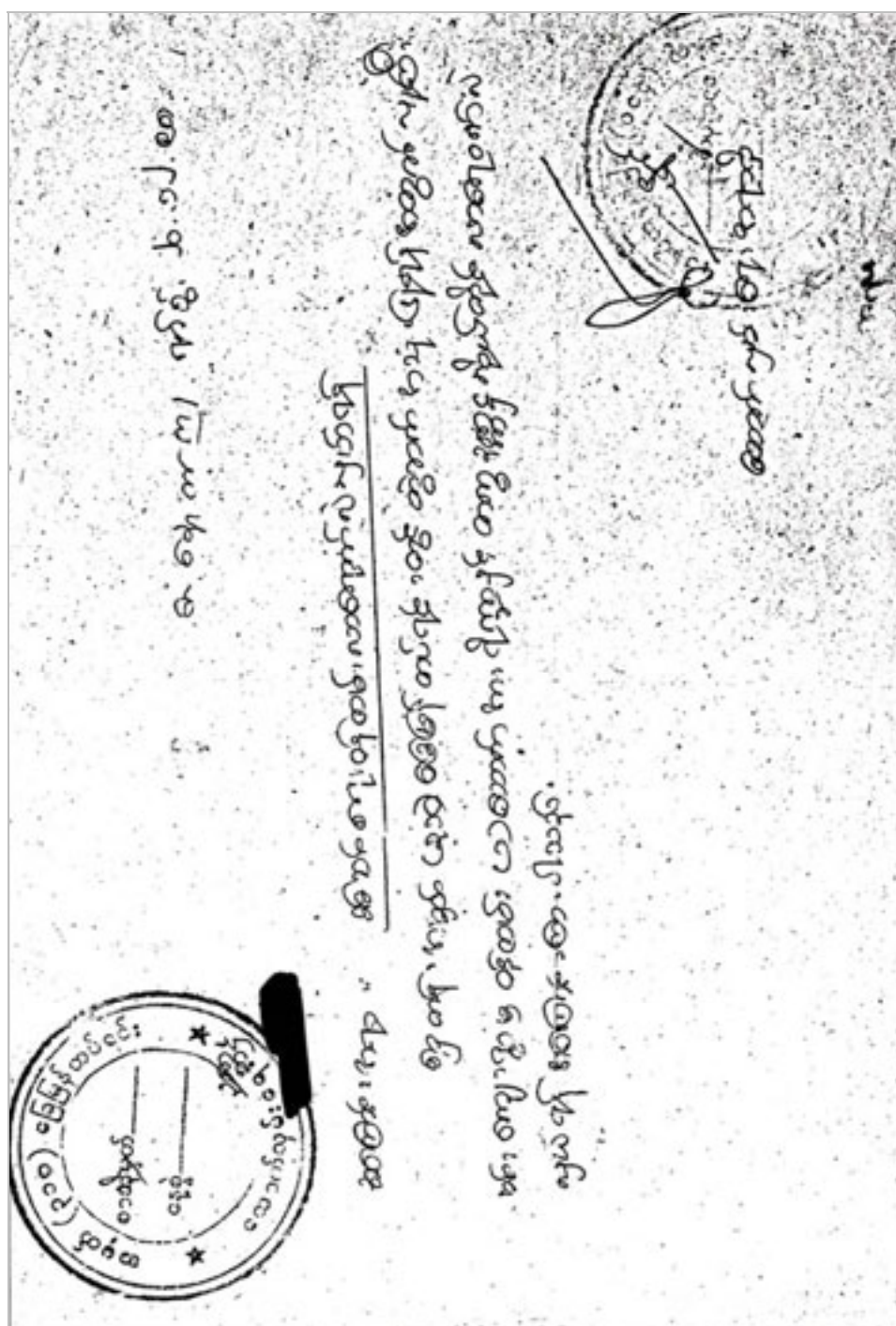
██████ မေးမြန်း

စာရေး တေးရေး အား ဂုဏ် ဖိစီးမှု မဟုတ်။ ဥပဒေ ဆိုရာမှ
 နှစ်ဆင့် (၁) မဟုတ်။ နှစ်ဆင့် (၁) မဟုတ်။ နှစ်ဆင့် (၁) မဟုတ်။
 နှစ်ဆင့် (၁) မဟုတ်။ နှစ်ဆင့် (၁) မဟုတ်။ နှစ်ဆင့် (၁) မဟုတ်။
 နှစ်ဆင့် (၁) မဟုတ်။ နှစ်ဆင့် (၁) မဟုတ်။ နှစ်ဆင့် (၁) မဟုတ်။

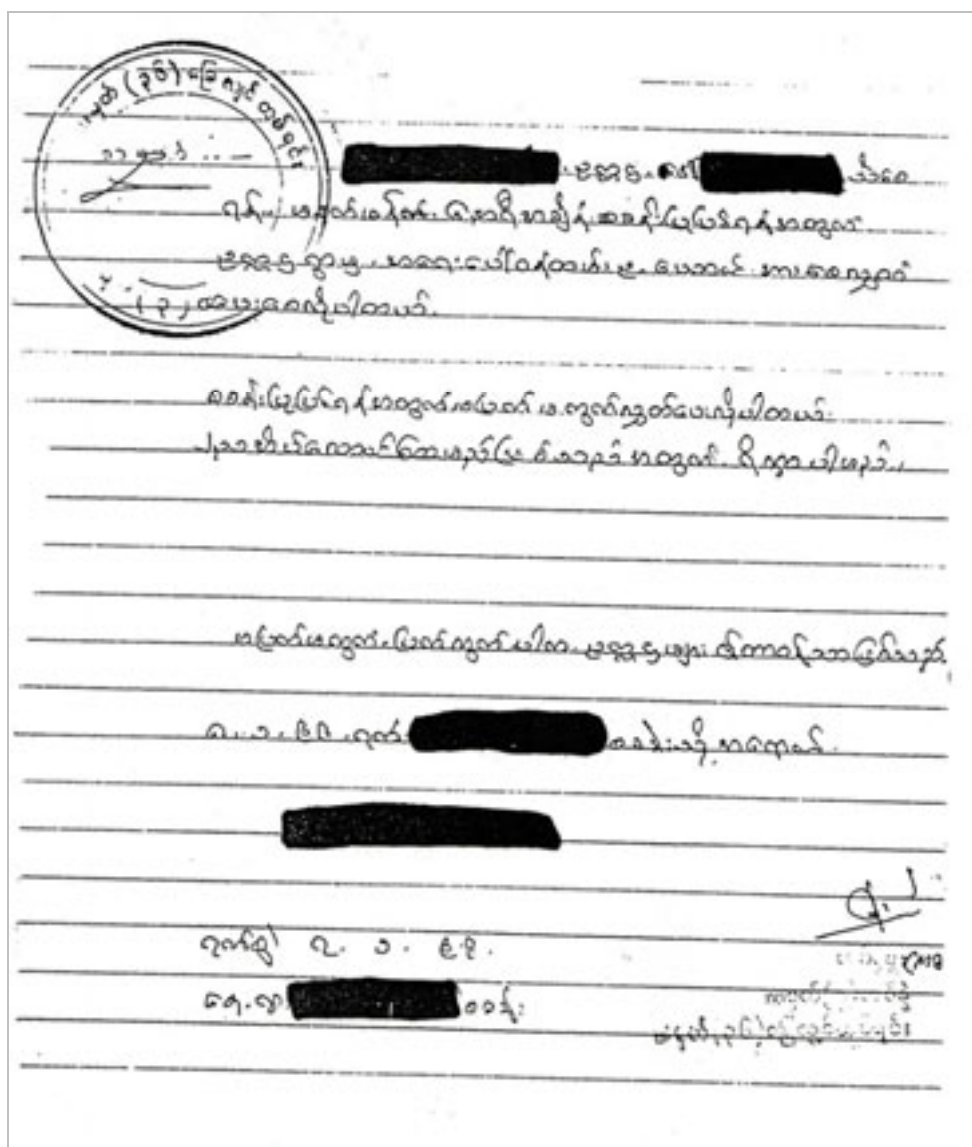
< ၂၀၄ ဝန်ထုပ်ထုပ်မှတ် >

ကြည့်ပါ။ ၂၀၄ ဝန်ထုပ်ထုပ်မှတ်
 ထောက်လှမ်းရေးအရာရှိ
 ဆုတံဆိပ် (၂၀၄) ဝန်ထုပ်ထုပ်မှတ်

Order (32)



Order (33)



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Front Cover Photo

Refugee children newly arrived at the Mae La camp, Tha Song Yan district, Thailand. Many of them with their parents revealed gross human rights in Papun district, Karen State in Burma by SPDC troops. How about their future?

(Photo by Aung Myo Min, HRDU)

Back Cover Photo

The refugees, including an old woman and her grandchildren waiting for screening process by the UNHCR officials in Mae La camp, Tha Song Yan district, Thailand (above).

(Photo by Aung Myo Min, HRDU)

The prisoners who were escaped from Puray Prison Labor camp in Karen State (below). ***(Photo by Win Htun)***



All are equal before the law
and are entitled without any
discrimination to equal
protection of the law.
[Article 7, Universal
Declaration of Human Rights]

