

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Note: 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 information. While some events presented here may have occurred in late 1994, many were only first recorded in 1995, and if not included in this annual report on human rights violations in Burma, would remain unknown to the general public. Therefore we have included some data from last year.

The following keywords describing human rights violations (HRV) have been used for indexing and cross-referencing the reports, and can be found at the beginning of each interview.

Assembly -	Freedom of assembly and association
Child -	Rights of the child
Detention -	Arbitrary detention and enforced or involuntary disappearances
Displacement -	Internally displaced persons
Execution -	Extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions
Expression-	Freedom of opinion and expression
Forced Labour -	Forced labour and slavery
Judicial -	Judicial System and Unfair Trial
Livelihood -	Rights of livelihood (i.e. pillaging, extortion)
Minorities -	Protection of minorities
Movement -	Freedom of movement
Refugees -	Situation of refugees
Religion -	Freedom of belief
Relocation -	Forced relocation
Repatriation -	Forced repatriation
Slavery -	Forced labour and slavery (i.e. portering)
Torture -	Torture and other cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment
Women -	Discrimination and violations against women

Interview: 1-HRV: Detention, Execution, Slavery, Torture

Name : Than Myint
 Age: 21
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Construction worker
 Address : Thaton Township, Mon State
 Interviewed: 17 January 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was arrested in Thaton Town at a bout 11:00 p.m. [*Thaton is a long 150 km northwest of Kawmoora.*] It was more than one month ago. I was walking on the road, coming back from the cinema. I went to see Rambo, the first one. The police arrested me and they detained me for two days. During that time they asked me no question. Then they just handed me over to the soldiers from LIB 118 under the command of LID 44. From Thaton we were taken to Pa-an where we spent one night. They kept us in a monastery called Ye Tha. The monks didn't say anything. Then we were taken to Thingan Nyi Naung and directly on to the army positions in front of Kawmoora. From Thaton to Thingan Nyi Naung we were formed a group of five and tied together. We were put on the trucks like that.

First I had to carry ammunition. It was really big [*his gesture indicated probably more than a 100 mm. large-calibre shell, possibly the 106 mm. recoilless gun shells being used against Kawmoora*]. We had to carry one per person from Hill 1450 to Ga Lu, in front of Kawmoora . Each day we had to make three round trips. We started at 6:00 a.m. and finished after dark, about 7:00 p.m. Other porters cooked for us and gave us our food wrapped up to carry along the way -- one cup of cooked rice, beans and boiled papaya trunk. Every time it was the same. Beans were good to receive, but they were in much watery soup. Sometimes we also got leaves from the jungle, but I didn't know what they were. We had to build a bamboo fence and sleep inside it, guarded by the soldiers. When we tried to go out, we were beaten. We had to sleep on the ground with no blankets. They gave us nothing. We had to sleep tied together in groups of five. Whenever we went to the toilet, five of us had to go together.

Being a porter was harder than my construction work. There were more than 50 porters in my group — maybe 55. Most of them were rural villagers living around Myawaddy. We had to carry ammunition, including 60mm mortar shells, food, soldiers' pack, as well as Sprite in green bottles and other soft drinks. I saw beatings and I was also beaten when I was not able to carry my load. The soldiers always pointed their guns and threatened us. Along the way a man died of exhausting. It was near Hill 1450. I saw him myself. He had been beaten on the side of the path just before we arrived. There was a wound on his head while more were found on

the shoulders. He was over 30, maybe 40 years old.

Usually after dark, the soldiers ordered us to take the ammunition right to the hilltop. I saw [Karen] shells falling on the hill and one bunker was smashed by a direct hit. Sometimes SLORC soldiers also made us cut down trees and take the logs there to make new defences. The soldiers told us not to run away, but the work was so severe, the food was so bad, and we got no shelter, so I couldn't resist the opportunity to escape. I ran with three others at 6:00 a.m. on 16 January when the soldiers ordered us to go and cut wood. Although a guard was with us, we all started running as soon as we reached some distance from him. He shot at us so we all separated. I don't know what happened to the others. One of them was in his 30's, one in his 20's and the other was old, his hair was grey — maybe over 50 years old. He was from Kyaik Don. I think they probably didn't get away. *(No sign has been seen of the others, so they were probably recaptured. The usual penalty for attempted escape is beating, torture, and sometimes death.)*

Now I have an itchy skin disease (*some kind of fungus*), by not serious. I have no money to go home, but I will try to go.

Interview: 2-HRV: Detention, Slavery

1) Name : Nyi Nyi
 Age: 26
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Address : Thaton District, Mon State
 Interviewed: 17 January 1995

2) Name : Khine Soe
 Age: 27
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Arakanese
 Religion: Buddhist
 Address : Thaton District, Mon State
 Interviewed: 17 January 1995
 Source: KHRG

Nyi Nyi: We came to Myawaddy District to harvest in the paddy fields. But we hadn't been there long before we were arrested. Two of us came together and we were staying with friends. All of us — five persons — were arrested. Three of our friends are still with LIB 118. While two of us were walking home for lunch in a midday about one month ago, we were arrested. I didn't know what army unit it was. They went around and arrested many people. They transferred us to LIB 118.

Sometimes, they made us carry logs to the front-line and sometimes we had to dig holes (*bunkers or foxholes*). There were about eight big guns positioned near us and I saw more than 200 soldiers around. Last night the (*Karen*) shells fell quite close to us. We ran away early this morning (*on Jan 17*), crossed the river and met Thai soldiers.

Khine Soe: We were there about 25 days. We had to carry logs, and then they ordered us to bury one of the dead soldiers. The dead soldiers was young, maybe about 18. One soldier from LIB 118 died from the shelling on the 16 [*January*] and one on the 15 [*that he saw*]. The soldiers called out things [*propaganda broadcasts over loudspeakers toward the Karen troops*] like, "We are all like brothers- in-law". Then they spoke again. Then they shot again. Like that. Then the Karen soldiers shot back, and they went silent. Two or three shells fell on the positions of LIB 118 and all the soldiers laid down and were quiet. [*Note: In Burmese, "We are like brothers-in-law" can have a double meaning: the friendly "we are like relatives" or the insulting "I've had your sister".*]

Interview: 3-HRV: Detention, Movement, Slavery, Torture, Child, Livelihood

1)Name : U Myat Soe
Age: 35
Sex : Male
Ethnicity: Burman
Religion: Buddhist
Address : Rangoon
Interviewed: 14-17 January 1995

2)Name : Maung Htun
Age: 23
Sex : Male
Ethnicity: Burman
Religion: Buddhist
Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State
Interviewed: 14-17 January 1995
Source: KHRG

U Myat Soe: I was living in Myawaddy. Around 15 December, at night, I was arrested because I had no permit to stay in Myawaddy. We were in the first group arrested in Myawaddy. I was arrested by police and handed over to LIB 118 at Thingan Nyi Naung. The soldiers took me to their positions opposite Kawmoora. Along the way we were tied together in groups of five.

Maung Htun: I was arrested in Myawaddy. I had been working at a river jetty.

Being a person from Kawkareik, I needed a permit from the section leader to stay in Myawaddy, and I didn't have one. I was arrested by soldiers on the road at 7:00 p.m., as I was walking home. We were both arrested on the same day. We slept in the barracks of battalion base for one night. More than 100 people [*all porters*] were there. Then we were sent out from there.

U Myat Soe: We were transported by trucks and there were about 40 people in the truck where I get into. When the truck stopped, we walked with soldiers until the night fell, travelling in two groups of about 20 people each. When we arrived at Meh Pa Leh at that night, we slept there. As porters, we had to carry ammunition and rice. They had 10 donkeys there for the first few days, then they were gone. Each person had to carry one very big shell [*probably 106 mm. Recoiless Gun shells*] or two 120mm [*mortar*] shells or rice. For rice, two people had to carry one sack. It was very tiring. One porter died along the path. It was round about 16 or 17 December 1994. I didn't know how he died. When I saw him the last time he was alive and groaning. Other porters who came along later told me he was dead.

The biggest shells we carried were about four feet long, with writing in English on them. We usually had to carry ammunition to a hilltop opposite Kawmoora. Sometimes, we had to cut trees to make bunkers. We had to make two trips per day. We started at 7:00 a.m. and returned from the first trip at about midday. We got no food. We rested a short while and made the trip again. We had a meal in the evening. We didn't even get enough rice. In the morning, the soldiers had tea to drink, had [*meat*] curry and money to buy things. But whenever we asked for more salt, they beat us. We were not be able to take even a cup of water without permission. The sergeant in charge of us was Win Tin. We were with LIB 118, and sometimes we saw soldiers from LIB 1 [*also under the command of LID 44*]. We had to carry the shells to the hilltop. From there we could see the river [*the Moei River, the Thai border just beyond Kawmoora*]. Just before we reached the very top of the hill, the soldiers took the shells from us. We saw big flashes [*explosions*] on the hilltop, and to the side of us, and sometimes even behind us.

Maung Htun: At 8:00 or 9:00 p.m., the soldiers made their broadcasts [*propaganda over loudspeakers to the Karen troops*]. Before speaking, the soldiers ordered us to be silent, not to talk, not even to cough.

U Myat Soe: Sometimes they played songs on cassettes in Karen language. Maybe it was Christian music. They made speeches in Burmese, sometimes about Jesus Christ. They said, "Come to God's side, come to the Lord's side and stay in peace". They said they were praying for good health and prosperity of Karen people. Sometimes, they said, "You are on the wrong side. Come to the Lord Buddha's peaceful shelter." It usually lasted at least 30 minutes.

We didn't see any soldiers killed in battle [*LIBs 1 and 2 have mounted the full scale assaults, not yet LIB 118*]. One soldier died from malaria. There was also one suicide

because that soldier just couldn't bear it any more. We heard the other soldiers talking about him. He was 15 years old.

It was cold at night [*it was cold season, and nightly temperatures on the hilltops often dropped below 10 degree centigrade*] and we only had our longyis [*sarongs*]. We had to ask for permission to go to the toilet and the soldiers guarded us all the time. We were allowed to bathe sometimes. If you were very seriously sick, the soldiers would call for a medic. If it was not so serious, you must keep working. [*U Myat Soe then poked his leg with his finger, and the flesh bounced back very slowly*]. See? I am suffering from jaundice. But I got no medicine. It was very difficult to get a medic. If the soldier you asked was in a good mood, you could get one. But if he was in a bad mood, then you would be beaten. Once I told Sgt Win Tin about my jaundice, and he just said, "I'm not a doctor, don't talk to me about it". Some porters who got malaria were given medicine if their fever was very bad, but usually not. Our main problems were constipation, piles and jaundice.

Maung Htun: When we got sick it was very difficult to get treatment. Many people had bad constipation, and maybe piles. Blood came out in our faeces. Out of about 200 porters we were around, nearly 50 were suffering from this. If it wasn't serious, the soldiers did nothing. Some were very serious and bleeding while they were working. At this stage, they were allowed to rest. Most of us tore our longyis to transform into blankets and those were all we had at night. They wouldn't let us make a fire, because they said the Karen soldiers would see the light at night or the smoke in the morning.

U Myat Soe: They beat us like dogs and cows. To escape from them was all that matter. Trying to escape was very difficult. One man tried before us. He was caught and beaten very badly until blood oozed from his nose and shoulders. But after a few minutes, they made him work again.

Maung Htun: I hurt my leg when I dropped the bomb I was carrying. I saw a lot of beatings. They beat the people regularly and they ordered us to be quick when carrying our loads. If we were too slow, they beat us. They beat us with whatever weapon they saw and were available. They scolded us using the foulest dirty language, but they were very young, younger than my youngest brother. Around 16, mostly, but even 14-year-olds. The one who committed suicide was around 15 year old. I'm telling the truth. They were scolding us, their elders, and some had voices that hadn't even broken yet. Little boy soldiers, swearing at us. In the morning they would call us "Mother fucker". We were swore like this without doing anything except sitting in our fence.

U Myat Soe: We didn't know when we would be released, but the soldiers said it would be after they captured Kawmoora. I ran away because they treated us like cattle. So we didn't want to work anymore. At 2:00 a.m., I crossed the fence and ran. I didn't know where to go. I could see the way by the moonlight that I was

crossing old paddy-fields. I was taken as a porter to Wah Lay before. In town, I also had to clean the roads and repair them when it was my section's turn. In the previous years, the permit to stay in Myawaddy cost 5 Ks per day, but in the following year it was charged 45 Ks. That was the reason why we didn't have permits when we were arrested. Since SLORC came in, inflation rate has been very high, and this has made living very difficult. Also, we always have to be afraid of the soldiers.

Maung Htun: Yes, we are afraid of their guns because they usually say, "We are the army and we can do anything". But they only do things which are benefited for themselves. Whenever there's a dispute between a civilian and a soldier, the soldier will always win, no matter the civilian is right. And that civilian will be sure to spend at least three days in detention. SLORC say many good things about themselves, but they do only bad things. Between Myawaddy and Kawkaik they normally stop vehicles and demand money, 300 Ks for each truck and 150 Ks for a pickup truck. They threaten to shoot if they don't get the money. It's true! Last year, they shot at one pickup because it didn't stop when they ordered. A bullet hit a woman in the leg. If the soldiers beat the travellers along that route and the travellers go tell their commander, he'll only say, "Yes, they beat you because you did something wrong, so go away".

U Myat Soe: I don't want to say anything more. We want to go back and I don't want to be in trouble by the soldiers, because my parents are old and I have six brothers and sisters, some of whom are young. It's very difficult for my family now and I only want to find a way to get some money. I must support my younger brothers and sisters who are still students.

Interview: 4-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture, Execution, Disappearance

Name : Ko Tint Way
 Age: 20
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Address : Thaton Town, Mon State
 Interviewed: 16 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was arrested by an army patrol unit around the end of December 1994 while I was walking on the road in Thaton. That unit was responsible for guarding the road. They handed over me to LIB 9 [*under the command of LID 44*]. First, I was detained overnight in the police station by the patrol unit that arrested me. The following morning, soldiers from LIB 9 came and took me from there. They took me to Wan Kha [*Kawmoora*]. Along the way, we slept one night each in Pa-an, Kawkaik,

Thingan Nyi Naung and at Black Stone'. Then we reached Hill 66, close to Hill 1450 [*Hill 1450 is directly in front of Kawmoora*]. The Operation Commander [*of the Kawmoora offensive*] there was Tin Thein. I knew because Cpl Thein Zan mentioned his name.

There were 45 porters in my group. I had to carry rice, condensed milk and sugar. [*LIB 9 was responsible for guarding the rear and supplying the other battalions*]. We only got a small plate of rice and salt per meal and were fed twice a day. As it was not enough, we had to drink much water and stole handfuls of beans while we were carrying the soldiers' rations and ate them with water. We stole them when the soldiers weren't close by. Whenever it was possible we tried to get empty milk tins and cooked the beans in them. It's the truth. If we even asked for fish paste they hit us in the face and said, "This is not your mother's house."

Usually the soldiers scolded us, and then if that didn't work they beat us. In my first days there, I was beaten 10 strokes with a branch of a tree. I was not able to climb the hill. I begged them to allow me to rest. But when the soldiers saw some porters in front of me could do the work, they said, "If they can do it, why can't you?" And then they beat me. They explained, "We are in a hurry, because Karen soldiers can appear at any time and they'll shoot at us, not at you. So we must beat you." Pvt Khin Maung Thein beat me at my head, body and hands. While we were climbing the hill, some of the elderly porters couldn't go easily, and then the soldiers hit them and beat them with rattle butts. If porters were very tired, they would just lie down on the side of the path. Some of the soldiers would show mercy and let them escape. But some would beat them and the porters died because of this. One died right in front of me. He was from Paung Township, Mon State. He pleaded that he couldn't climb anymore and asked to be excused. Then he said, "Do as you like to me." The kindly soldiers told him to try to run away. But the others arrived there, they beat him, kicked him down the ravine from the hilltop and he was dead. Then the soldiers warned us that he died because he had tried to escape, and that when they caught him he'd tried to resist them. He was over 40 years old.

At first I was told that after all the goods were delivered I could go, and that this would be a maximum of 20 days. But I was a porter for two months. After Hill 66 I had to spend one and a half months at Thet Ka Ya [*about 15 km further north*]. We had to cut trees, carry water and every two or three days we had to carry rations for the soldiers at Thet Ka Ya. At Hill 66 we could get some beans, but at Thet Ka Ya we could only get salt. Then I was sent to Wan Kha. A lot of rice had arrived at Wan Kha so we were sent to help.

I had nothing, just a shirt and a pair of pants. In the cold nights there were many of us, so we all slept very close together [*it was cold season, when nightly temperatures often dropped below 10 degree centigrade*]. We could only make a fire at dawn and dusk. But after sunset, it wasn't allowed because it would give off light. One time a sick porter had to defecate in our compound [*the fenced enclosure where porters*

are kept under guard], and then the soldiers beat all of us. If one person breaks the rules like that then everyone gets punished. But amongst the porters a few are paid porters *[hired by villages to go in place of their own people]*. They know how to deal with the soldiers very well and can get whatever they want *[probably by paying for it]*. There was one like that in my group, a 45-50 year old man named Meh Zan from Thingan Nyi Naung.

I was at Wan Kha-1, and the fighting zone is at Wan Kha-2, We had to carry wounded soldiers to two trucks. They were carried back by other soldiers, then we had to carry them the rest of the way to the trucks. I saw the bodies of about 100 soldiers who were killed *[this was in the major SLORC assault of 8 February, when about 200 SLORC soldiers were killed, many of whom were left to rot on the battle field]*. We ourselves had to dig the holes and bury them at the foot of a hill, near their positions. The elderly porters dragged the bodies over, and we younger porters dug the holes. There were at least 100 bodies, because I myself helped digging two holes. We put seven or eight bodies in each hole, because the ground was so hard that we couldn't dig one hole for each corpse. Our group of porters dug six or seven holes like this, and there were three group of porters doing the same thing. I was an eyewitness to all of this.

I didn't see any porters die in battle, but porters who couldn't do the work died, as I said before. It was from Wan Kha that I planned to escape. Altogether three of us, but I don't know what happened to the other two because we disagreed upon which way to run so I lost touch with them. That day there were 65 porters and 10 soldiers, so we could run away. Before there had usually been 20 porters with 15 soldiers, so we couldn't. We started to run between the line of rice supply and Wan Kha. I spent two nights in the jungle, then another night after I crossed the river *[the Moei river, which is the Thai border]*, and now I've been here for one night. *[He was interviewed on 16 February, so he escaped on 12 February. At this point LID 44 was being withdrawn and replaced by LID 22, so the withdrawing soldiers were probably less concerned about escaping porters.]* As a porter I had to carry at least 15 viss *[24 kg]* and a maximum of 25 viss *[40 kg]*. My shoulders are torn because of the straps on the bamboo baskets — I had only one thin shirt underneath them. Now I will try to go back home.

Interview: 5-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture, Execution

Name : Kyaw Win
 Age: 24
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Day Labourer
 Address : Kyaikto Township, Mon State

Interviewed: 3 February 1995
Source: KHRG

On 2 January 1995, the village headman summoned me and took me to the police station in Kyaikto together with my cousin Lu Maw. We were detained there for five days. Then LIB 207, under the command of LID 22, took us by truck beyond Pa-an and Hlaing Bwe to where Battalion 962 has a camp. When we got there, every porter had to carry six 81mm mortar shells from Battalion 962 to Manerplaw. We were fed two meals a day, but we only got a canteen-lid full of rice for two men. On the way to Manerplaw, there was fighting at Bo Laung hill. When we got near Manerplaw, we only got a short rest and then all the porters had to move on with soldiers patrolling a road. Later we found out it was the road to Mae Tha Waw. We had to stay for three days with the soldiers who were guarding that road. The soldiers wore uniforms with a badge on one shoulder showing a fan, and number 99 on the other shoulder [*indicating LID 99*]. There were about 50 soldiers carrying short guns.

Whenever we couldn't carry the loads, we were beaten brutally. On 26 January, Lu Maw was beaten with a two-inch-thick cane stick because he couldn't carry his load of 81mm mortar shells. He got many bruises on his thighs so he couldn't walk, but he still had to carry ammunition. On 28 January, when we reached a hill, he was really feeble and couldn't walk or carry anymore. As he begged to stop, they only beat him more. The soldiers said my cousin was not useful anymore, "so we'll kill him and then we can pay the compensation for his life". Finally the soldiers had to support him on each side so he could reach top of the hill. When we reached the hilltop, they kicked him back down. Then the soldiers dragged him up the hill again. They tied a piece of cloth over his mouth, and then Sgt Toe Toe killed him by bayoneting with Carbine rifle in the left side of my cousin's ribs. Seven soldiers held the foot of the dead body, dragged away, and nobody knows where they buried him. Another Sergeant saw me secretly watching my cousin being beaten and stabbed by Sgt Toe Toe, so he kicked me with his combat boot, beat me with a piece of bamboo, then took the knife he was using to slice up banana stems for food, and cut off my little finger.

My cousin's name was Lu Maw, his nickname was Zaw Zaw Htoo. He was 18 years old. He was a Burman Buddhist and worked as a day labourer. He was not a member of any group. He was killed by Sgt Toe Toe from LIB 205 of LID 22.

Interview: 6-HRV: Child, Detention, Slavery, Torture

Name : Hla Maung
Age: 14
Sex : Male
Ethnicity: Burmese Muslim

Religion: Islam
 Family: Father alive, mother deceased, have one younger brother and one younger sister
 Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 4 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

My father is a trishaw driver. I was not in school. I had to work to help my family. I do cooking and house work. I went to school up to third standard. They came at about 3:00 a.m. on the 25th [of January]. While I was sleeping in my house with my brother, they came to our house to check the guests *[all house guests must be registered with the local SLORC, though it appears that in this instance the soldiers were there only to take porters, as they had no guests]*. I opened the window to get out while my father ran away through the back door. They caught me and put me in their small truck. There were four or five soldiers, together with the police. They pointed a gun at me. They took me to Pa-an and then transported by a TE-11 truck to Hlaing Bwe near the Taung Galay army camp. We slept one night there and I was ordered to carry a load. I had to carry three mortar shells. It was heavy. I had to carry for seven or eight days, both at night and in the day time. I couldn't sleep nor rest. When we arrived to the place where we could lay our loads down (*they were making trips back and forth from army camp to front-line*), we just got to rest for a short time and then we carried on. We only got one or two hours every two days to rest when we arrived at their camp. We couldn't sleep, only sit down. I only got one meal in five days. It was only plain rice. Along the way, there was water and I could drink my ration of water with a small cup. They brought the water and sometimes they gave me some. But sometimes they didn't. I saw some porters very exhausted. They didn't get any medicine.

I wasn't beaten, but I saw others. The soldiers kicked them with their boots, hit with rifle butts, and if they had a bamboo stick they used it. When the porters couldn't carry or walked too slowly, the soldiers beat them. They beat both old and young men. Some porters in my group were even younger than me. They were about 10 or 12 years old. I saw four, five, six or seven young boys like that. They carried the same load as me. I saw old men about 50, 60, 70 or 80 years old. I saw a dead man. He was old.

We were with SLORC LIB 205. There were four or five, sometimes 10 porters for every soldier. The other porters were carrying bullets and other things. I didn't know exactly. I didn't see any fighting. After eight days, I went to fetch water, crossed the river and ran away with nine other men. We slept one night on the way and the following day we arrived at the Thai border. I didn't know where. We crossed the river by boat and walked to a village, then we came here by car. I will go back home together with the others.

Interview: 7-HRV: Child, Detention, Slavery, Torture

Name : Tin Htun
 Age: 14
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burmese Muslim
 Religion: Islam
 Family: Father & mother alive, have one elder sister and five younger brothers and sisters
 Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 4 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

We live outside the town. My father is a trishaw driver and I look after my family's cow. I mowed one basket of grass every day, and that was enough for our cow. I went to school — I was a 5th standard student. None of us in my family had ever been a porter before. Between 3:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. on the 25th [of January], the soldiers came to arrest us. My father heard them coming and he ran away. When my mother opened the door, I was sleeping. There were about seven soldiers. They pointed their guns at me and took me to their truck. They didn't say anything. They just pushed me into the truck. There were many people there. Hla Maung [see interview 6] was already in the truck.

They took us from Kyon Doe to Pa-an, then to Taung Galay and we had to change the trucks. We arrived at a place where there were shops and we had to start carrying the loads. I had to carry three mortar shells. We couldn't sleep, and we got one meal for four days. The soldiers kicked me once at the hip because I walked too slowly. I saw other people were kicked with boots, hit with rifle butts and sticks because they couldn't carry. The soldiers swore "Kalar!" at them. Many porters, both young and old men, were beaten.

We also had to cut bamboo for them. Twenty porters had to cut 200 bamboo. I didn't know what was the bamboo for. Maybe they sold it. I managed to escape with nine other people when I went to carry water. The soldiers were guarding the people who were carrying the water. I was lagging behind them, ran away and crossed the river together with the others. I'm going to go back home. I'm not afraid because I'll go back together with the others. My mother must be worried for me.

Interview: 8-HRV: Child, Detention, Slavery, Torture

Name : Maung Chit Lwin
 Age: 16
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Pa-O

Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Father & mother alive, have one elder sister and one elder brother
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 4 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

I went to school up to 3rd standard. Now I am a farmer and also a bricklayer. While my brother and I were coming home from the farm, we were arrested by the army near a police checkpoint. They grabbed me at the collar and pushed me into their truck. They took us by truck directly to Kyon Doe. After driving all night, we arrived at the army camp in the following morning. Then they made us carry bullets and loads. I had to carry three 81mm mortar shells. While we were carrying, they did not give us any food or water. We could only get some when we arrived at their camp. I only got one meal in four days. I was a porter for 10 days and during that time I had three meals of rice and beans.

Our group didn't carry at night. But I couldn't sleep because it was too crowded. We had to sleep on the ground, in a fenced area beside the army camp. There were soldiers around the fence. As it was so crowded, we had to lean against each other. They guarded us around the fences to make sure we were not able to escape.

Although I wasn't beaten, I saw soldiers beating others. They beat with a stick, at the feet, back, head, everywhere. I saw people who died. I didn't know how they died. I just stayed behind the fence. But I saw when they carried the corpses. I didn't see what they did with the bodies. I saw people get sick. The sick had to carry along with everybody else. Those who were very sick and weak could stop carrying for a few minutes. Then they had to go again.

We had to carry shells and bullets, no food, only ammunition. We also had to cut bamboo. I didn't know what was it for. I was with LIB 207 the whole time. There were about 20 porters for every soldier. One day, I pretended to fetch water and I tried to escape. But I came back as they saw me. At that night, I managed to escape again together with my brother. I was in the jungle for two days and I've been here for one day [*he escaped on 1 February 1995*]. I'm afraid, but I want to go back home.

Interview: 9-HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Slavery, Torture

Name : Maung Than Oo
 Age: 29
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Pa-O
 Religion: Buddhist

Family: Married with one child (age one month)
 Occupation: Trishaw driver
 Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 4 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

When I was going home from work on 24 January 1995, they caught my younger brother and me. Their truck was already stopped in the street. When we passed near it, four or five soldiers jumped out and grabbed us. They said, "You have no way to run!" and they pointed their guns at us and pushed us to get into their truck. I didn't know that we were being forced into portering. I only knew it when we arrived at the police station because I saw many people were being arrested. Usually you can give them a bribe to avoid from being a porter. But since they needed many porters at that time, it was not possible to deal with them. As they needed so many porters they didn't even care how old or how young the porters were.

We had to go all day and night by truck and finally we arrived at Pa-an. After that, we were headed to Hlaing Bwe and then to their camp where we slept for one night. The following day, I had to start carrying about 1,000 bullets. It was too heavy but I had to carry it. If I couldn't carry it, they would beat me. So I had to try. Everybody had to carry heavy loads. I had to carry about 23 viss [37 kg]. We had to keep on going until we reached the place they needed us to be. If it took two days, then we had to carry without stopping for two days. We had to carry in the hot sun, no time to take a rest and only a little time to sleep. No food. No water. The soldiers had water but they wouldn't give us any to drink. If you really needed to drink, you had to buy water: one tinful [about 200ml] for 30 Ks. Because of having no money, we were thirsty and hungry. But we had to obey their will. Because if we didn't, we would be beaten. The first day we were very thirsty because we had to climb up to the top of a mountain. The following day, we walked in the plain and we got some water from a stream. I only got three meals within 10 days. We had to cook when we stopped. Sometimes, while we were eating, they ordered us to keep on walking. And sometimes we had to throw away the rice because we were not able to finish cooking it. The soldiers had two meals, in the morning and evening, almost every day. They had ready-made food. They had many rations. But they shared us nothing.

I just had to carry whether I could or not. I was with my brother [Maung Chit Lwin — see interview 8] all the time because he was so young. He was very much afraid of the soldiers. I tried to help him because I was afraid that if he couldn't carry his load the soldiers would beat him. He was in front of me. When he couldn't carry, I helped him. When we were climbing up the mountain, I slipped down and bumped into a soldier. He kicked me in my back with his boot and I fell down. It was painful, because my load was very heavy and it fell down upon me. I still have sores on my shoulders.

Whenever we slept or ate, we never had enough. We never had enough time for

U sleep, and they wouldn't even allow us to speak out loudly. Four hundred to five hundred porters were kept inside the fences. Sometimes, we had to stand when they called our names. For food, they gave me only rice. Sometimes, they gave some beans. When they ordered us to work, it was very hard. At their camp the soldiers said, "For the moment you have no journey to make" and they ordered us to cut bamboo. But I didn't know what they used them for. I think it was to build fences for all the new porters who were coming, to make sure that they couldn't run away. Every 20 persons of us had to cut 150 bamboo and we had to carry them to the front of the soldiers who were sitting and counting the numbers. I supposed they were making a new temporary camp. They ordered us to clean the camp and carry rice and mortar shells. We had to clean the mess around the camp where they slept. They kept changing the soldiers many times. They forced us to work whether we could do or not. They treated us as slaves. They treated us as their cattle, as their buffaloes. They didn't treat us like fellow human beings. They only cared about their job, they didn't want to know about the people, about whether they could carry or not. They forced us to do everything whether we could do or not. I saw men who couldn't work well — the soldiers beat them and they were bleeding. They kicked them, hit them with rifle butts, punched them and beat them with sticks. I dared not look at the people bleeding. The soldiers felt satisfied when someone was bleeding and lost conscious. At that stage, they stopped beating him. We couldn't complain to the soldiers because of their guns. If I'd complained, I would have been beaten. Whatever they do, we had to bear it and give up.

D After beating some one until he lost conscious, the soldiers just left him. Every group of 40 or 50 porters had one "leader" and if someone was beaten unconscious the soldiers ordered that "leader" to look after him and carry him to the camp. They said, "It is your duty to carry him yourself. This does not concern with us!" They didn't care about the unconscious people, just abandoned them and went on their way. But we felt we couldn't just leave them. so we shared their loads: half their load each. Someone who didn't have a load carried the body. We couldn't abandon them because we all live together in the town. But the soldiers didn't even turn around to see.

R There were convicts in blue clothes: the soldiers called it "convict clothes". The men explained to us, "We were called from jail and ordered to work as porters for a long time. We want to go back, but they don't allow us. Now some have already been here for four or five months. We are eager to go back."

H After eight or nine days, we pretended to fetch some water at night and ran away. We didn't know if others kept carrying further, because we didn't want to carry any further. We didn't want to die in their hands. We knew many people who had already escaped. About 400 or 500 porters, including us, had run away. There were over 5,000 porters, and also many convicts. The soldiers said that LID 77 and 99 were also going to arrive with their own porters. We were with LIB 207. When we were carrying the mortar shells, we realised we were going to Manerplaw. On the way,

we met porters coming back from Manerplaw. They said, "They got Manerplaw already, the rebels already withdrew." So then we were walking in the mountains three or four more days and arrived back at their main camp. All the soldier were SLORC [*i.e. he encountered no DKBA' at all*].

If I go home now, I know I may face danger. But I have a one-month old child and I am worried about him. My wife had a baby very recently. But I'm worried about her health or how they can get money and food if I don't go back. When I was arrested, I called some girls in the street, "Please go tell my family. I don't know where they're taking me." My family didn't know where I'd been taken. If someone from here can show me the way, I may get back home. If not, maybe I can't get there. I also had to work for them four or five years ago. The soldiers already had a camp in Kawkaeik, and they called us to work for them. They said, "If you don't come, we'll arrest you". We had to go in turns: for example, out of every 500 households, 200 households had to go every day. We had to go 18 or 19 times within that three to four months. We had to cut wooden posts to build their camp, dig the ground to erect the poles, and build barracks for them. We had no choice because they had power in their hands. If we didn't want to do it, they forced us. So we just had to do what they say.

Interview: 10-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture

Name :	Sein Than
Age:	30
Sex :	Male
Ethnicity:	Burmese Muslim
Religion:	Islam
Family:	Married with four children (age from one week to 13 years)
Occupation:	Trishaw driver
Address :	Kawkaeik Township, Karen State
Interviewed:	5 February 1995
Source:	KHRG

I am a trishaw driver, and I also repair trishaws. I was arrested about 14 days ago. While I was sleeping at home at about 8:00 p.m., they woke me up and ordered me to follow them. They said, "Wake up! Come and follow us for a short time." I said, "I have done nothing wrong. What will you do, Sir?" Then they put me in jail. They said, "You will be a porter." Then they brought me to the battlefield. They brought me by truck directly to the Strategic Command located between the mountains. I got out and started to carry rice. My load weighed about 20 viss [*32 kg*]. When some porters were not able to carry, the soldiers beat them. There was a 'porter centre' with a fence. It was like a pig sty. More than 1,000 porters were there. The soldiers said to us, "You will be transported to another place called Taung Phaung [*'barren mountain'*]. Then you will come back and be released." Nobody believed them.

I was arrested by the police, the militia and section leader of the town. I had to carry rice for LIB 207. They fed us only rice and a bit of fish paste. Sometimes, I had breakfast but no dinner. Sometimes, I had dinner but no breakfast. I couldn't sleep at night because they put us together on the ground and it was very crowded. Once when I wanted to go the toilet, one soldier told me, "You can go there." But another soldier beat me up with a bamboo stick which was four-finger thick. He said, "You didn't see the toilets. This is not the porter place." I saw a porter beaten because he could not carry his load. Another one died of exhaustion on the hills. He was about 18 or 19 years old. I saw him with my own eyes. The soldiers told us they would bury him, and then they said, "Go back to your place!"

There were over 2,00 porters and about 600 or 700 soldiers. I didn't see any DKBA soldiers. Some porters carried rice while others carried ammunition. We had to carry the whole day, from about 7:00 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. until we reached the other place. We slept there and we returned at 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. on the following day. We had to carry back and forth. We had no rest time while we were carrying. We could see water, but we couldn't drink it. Sometimes, one of the commanders distributed water to all porters. At that time each of us would get one milk-tin [*about 200ml*] of water. I didn't get enough water nor food. While I was cutting bamboo, I ran away with nine others. We went downstream. I saw a man who was fishing and he showed us the way. We climbed a mountain and we saw the soldiers again. They shot at us. We arrived at a small village near the Moei River, then we crossed into Thailand three days ago. We were porters behind Mae Tha Waw [*about 25 km south of Manerplaw on the Thai border, SLORC's supply base for the offensive from the south*].

Interview: 11-HRV: Force Labour, Slavery, Torture

Name : Maung Min Thein
 Age: 30
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with three children (age from one month to 12 years)
 Occupation: Water seller
 Address : Pa-an Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 5 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was not arrested. It was my turn for labour. They told me that I have to go do labour for the monk at Myaing Gyi Ngu [*U Thuzana, the monk who is leader of DKBO*]. They said I had to go with 44 other men to clear the ground and build a fence around his monastery, and that if I went this time I wouldn't have to go the next time. But instead, they sent me here. We left from Taung Galay barracks, they

sent me to Strategic Command and from there I had to start carrying ammunition to Taung Phaung hill [*'barren mountain'*]. I was very afraid, and I only thought about going back home. I was with a SLORC Signal Corps, I think the number was 201. I asked them their names but they didn't reply. On the way to Taung Phaung, there was fighting on the hill. I had to bury SLORC soldiers and "Ringworm" [*SLORC name for Karen soldiers*], one hole for two men. I saw five or six dead people. The porters were behind the soldiers, carrying the shells. During the fighting, we could hide. Three porters were killed. Some lost their legs, and some were injured in the eyes. They carried the wounded in hammocks down the mountain to the clinic. After giving some medicine, they sent them away. But I didn't know where because I had to return to my place to carry. I saw about four or five men who lost their legs. The fighting started early in the morning and the Karen soldiers withdrew at 3:00 p.m. Then, the commander shouted at his soldiers, "You should wear women's longyi [*sarongs*]! Why didn't you catch them?" The SOLRC soldiers captured some guns, pistols and bullets from the rebels. They made the porters carry all of these further to another place: Bo Laung Gone and Kye Pyaut Gone.

I had to carry mortar shells, two long ones. It weighed 20 viss [*32 kg*]. I got two meals each day but it wasn't enough, and I missed food for two days. At night, I had to sleep on the ground. At 7:00 a.m., we started to carry down the mountain, then back up. Then they gave us some food and I could rest, and then I had to carry water up the mountain for cooking in the evening. At night, I got some rice with just a fingertip of salt. I had to carry every day for about a month, back and forth. I was beaten twice on my back with a bamboo stick along with three other porters because we tried to follow some soldiers who were being sent back. The others called us back and beat us. If I stayed with them a longer time, I would die. I didn't get enough food and I couldn't carry anymore.

One day, we had to bring the rice rations. There were 40 porters in our group but there were no soldiers escorting us for a time. We ran, and then we mixed together with a group of traders. But we met SLORC soldiers, they beat me and sent me back to the Strategic Command. When I got there, I didn't see any soldier so I ran away. I passed through a bamboo grove, along a stream and then I arrived here after one day. I arrived here two days ago [*on 3 February*]. I had never been a porter before. I am going back to Pa-an. I think it is dangerous, but I have to go back because maybe my children don't have any food. My wife has no job. I am the only breadwinner in our family.

Interview: 12-HRV: Child, Slavery, Torture,

Name : Hla Myaing
 Age: 16
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: ½Shan½Indian Muslim

Religion: Islam
 Family: Parents both alive, one sister and two brothers
 Occupation: Student
 Address : Kawkareik Town, Karen State
 Interviewed: 5 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

I am a 8th standard student [*just before high school*]. About 10 days ago [*around 26 January*] the soldiers came to my house at 4:00 a.m., checked our family registration list and took me. There were three soldiers and two militia. They arrested one person from each family in the whole quarter [*part of town*]. I was alone with my mother because my brothers were in Myawaddy. I didn't know where the soldiers took me, because I've never been there before. They took me by truck to an army camp where they were gathering porters. They made us sitting there together with porters from the other groups. Then, they made us carry loads to the operation [*battle*] area. I had to carry seven *pyi* [*about 15 kg.*] of rice. As we are children, they didn't order us to carry very heavy loads. They beat me with a stick as big around as a bamboo. They kicked me in my stomach and it was very painful, and they hit me in back with a stick, and I kept going. We got one meal a day. If they fed us in the morning, then they didn't feed us in the evening. If they fed us in the evening, then we got nothing in the morning. They gave us uncooked rice and we had to cook it in a milk tin. We had to sleep on the path. I brought a very thin blanket with me when they arrested me. I couldn't sleep because my stomach hurt very much from the beating. They didn't give us any medicine. We had to buy it. When they arrested me, I had more than 20 Ks in my pocket, so I used it to buy two tablets for my stomach pain and took them. Sometimes it is okay, but sometimes it still hurts.

There were many young boys of my age, and some of them were students. I saw seven students from my school there. Most of them were about my age, but some were only 13 or 14 years old. There were also old men, about 40 or 50 years old. Some boys of my age couldn't carry so they were beaten. I saw several people beaten, and two killed. I thought they died from starvation and dehydration. They were 42 or 43 years old. The soldiers just threw their bodies into the valley.

Two of us escaped while we were cutting bamboo. We slept one night in the forest, then we found a path and footprints. We followed them up to the [*Moei*] rive. I saw other porters there, and we crossed the river by the help of a fisherman. He took us to a monastery, and then some Thai police brought us here. There were 24 of us who arrived here yesterday [*4 February*].

Interview: 13-HRV: Slavery, Torture, Forced Labour

Name : Win Maung
 Age: 35

Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with four children (age from 2 to 11 years)
 Occupation: Vegetable seller
 Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 5 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

On the 25th of last month [*January*], a village LORC committee member called me in the morning to help in the village. I said, "I am not free." Then he said, "It's only for a short while". So I went with him, and then I was to be a porter. I did not realise until they sent me to the military column in Taung Galay village. Then, they took me by truck to Hill 962 at night. The following morning, I started to carry rice. I had to carry about 10 or 12 viss [*16-19kg*] for two days. We got one milk tin of uncooked rice for two men in the morning and we had to cook it ourselves in the evening. We had to drink water from the stream when we could. While we were carrying, we asked for water but all we got was punches. I couldn't sleep at night because we had no blanket. I had to sleep on the ground in the dust. I didn't bring anything with me because I didn't know that I would be a porter. I saw many porters. I arrived with a group of 24 porters and I saw many others. The soldiers divided the porters into four or five groups with fences. Not only porters, also convicts. They were in a separate group. They got the same treatment as all of us.

They ordered me to go and cut bamboo, and then I ran away. I had to sleep one night in the jungle, then two nights in Mae Tha Waw. Then, I was brought here by car. Now I want to go back home.

Interview: 14-HRV: Child, Slavery, Torture, Women

Name : Zaw Zaw Htun
 Age: 35
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burmese Muslim
 Religion: Islam
 Family: Married with four children (age from five to 12 years, but one child already deceased)
 Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 5 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was a conductor/mechanic on a passenger car, but now I am a fisherman in the local ponds. I didn't get enough food from that, so my wife had to sell things in the market. I was arrested by the village militia and some policemen while I was sleeping.

There were five of them. It was about 12 days ago on a Friday, at 3:00 a.m. I was sent by a police car. Then I had to carry about 16 viss [25 kg.] of rice. I was with LID 22. They changed. When one battalion finished, another came and they changed duties. First I was with LIB 209, and then LIB 203, both of which are under the command of LID 22. I had to carry the rice for one day until we arrived [at the front-line], then I had to cut bamboo for one day and then I escaped. When we first started walking, we got no food for three meals. I was thirsty but water was very rare. Then, I received only a small plate of rice. At night we could only sit down and lean against each other to sleep. It was a very narrow space. I saw over 1,000 porters, not counting the convicts. I saw 13 year-old boys and men 40-60 years old. I also saw over 50 women being sent back on a truck. We were at Kye Byone Hill, near Manerplaw. I arrived after the fighting had already ended.

I wasn't beaten, but I saw other porters beaten. We also had to go at night too. When some young porters couldn't carry their loads, the soldiers beat them. I dared not look. They divided the porters into the weak and strong, and those who couldn't carry were beaten. I saw some porters being punched almost to death. After they beat them, some porters were wounded and others were slightly hurt. They divided them again: the weak porters and the strong porters. My brother-in-law N— was also a porter, and I had to help him carry his load. The soldiers didn't allow us to take a rest. Some young porters who couldn't carry dropped their loads and ran away, so the others were beaten. I saw somebody in front of me being beaten. I dared not look and I passed them. My brother-in-law is younger than me, he's just an 8th standard student. Last year he didn't sit his exams and quitted the school, and now he had to go as a porter with me. He had to carry five mortar shells. When he couldn't carry them, we shared the shells. Otherwise he would have died because of the weight. A soldier was about to hit him when I took some of the shells and helped him. He is 17 years old, my wife's younger brother. He escaped with me. Now he is here.

I saw one person being buried but I didn't know if it was a soldier or a porter. I also saw some people lying on the ground, but I didn't know if they were dead or not. After I was cutting bamboo, they gave some rice to the porters. After eating it, I ran. I went through the valley and I saw some soldiers with porters. They saw us and tried to shoot at us, but we all managed to escape: 33 of us. A group of about 10 people ran first, then eight more, then 18 others behind. I was in the middle group. After passing three mountains, we all joined together. It took four days to get here. [They must have been lost, as it is not a great distance.]

Interview: 15-HRV: Child, Slavery, Torture, Execution

Name : Nyunt Swe
Age: 35
Sex : Male

Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with two children (age 7 and 11)
 Occupation: Bricklayer/Trishaw driver
 Address : Hlaing Bwe Town, Karen State
 Interviewed: 5 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was arrested when I was pedalling the trishaw. I was on my way to give it back to its owner at about 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. and I wanted to go home to see my wife. But the militia, policemen and Hlaing Bwe army units were co-operating to take people to go as porters, and they arrested me. I pushed the trishaw into a ditch in front of my friend's house and I shouted to my friends: "Here is my trishaw. Please save it ." It was on 25 January 1995.

I was taken from Hlaing Bwe by truck directly to the jungle at Hill 962. The trip lasted all night long and we arrived there in the morning on the following day. As soon as we arrived, we started to carry. I had to carry rice. We had to carry for five or six miles, up a very high and barren mountain [*back and forth, again and again*]. We got only rice to eat, and it was not enough. At first, the soldiers cooked the rice and gave a handful of it to each of us. Later, they gave us one milk-tin [*about 200 ml.*] full to cook for ourselves for two meals. Sometimes we didn't get to eat for 1½ days, from the morning until the following evening. I was a porter for over one week. I couldn't sleep at night. I was sick and I felt cold. I was suffering from malaria. They gave me no medicine. I had back pain and my whole body was hurting because of beatings. They beat me with a stick and also with a rifle butt on my back. The bamboo stick was big, like this [*he indicated about two-three-inches diameter*]. I was beaten twice — five times and two times each — by the soldiers. I could hardly walk as the mountain was very steep. So the soldiers said, "Why can't you carry like us?", and they beat me. I was sick, my back was injured from beatings. I was bleeding. I still have one wound, but the others have already healed. When I crossed the river, the Thai police in Mae Tha Waw gave me some medicine. I saw many porters that the soldiers were beating. The soldiers kicked some of them down the mountain side. I dared not look at the people who were kicked down the slope. The soldiers didn't allow us to look, they said they would beat us. But I peeked. After beating them, the soldiers kicked them down. I also saw three dead bodies. Some of them died from lack of food and some were beaten to death. The oldest among them was 60 and the youngest was about 28 or 30. In my group, there were boy ports as young as 15 or 16.

Many battalions were all combined together. I didn't remember which ones. I dared not look at them, because if you looked at them they said, "Why do you look at us?" and they beat us. There were many porters. I think about 1,000 excluding convicts. There were at least 300 or 400 convicts as well. The soldiers divided in two different groups, and kept the convicts on the other side of us. We had to work harder than the

convicts. They arrived before us and had already done a lot of work, so they were given some rest. After carrying all the rice, we had to cut bamboo. The soldiers said it was to build a new camp at the foot of the hill near Hill 962 Strategic Command. While I was cutting bamboo, I discussed how to escape with some other porters, and then we escaped. We slept one night in the jungle, two nights at Mae Tha Waw and one night here. *[He was interviewed on 5 February.]*

Interview: 16-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Force Labour, Disappearance

Name : Zaw Mya
 Age: 42
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: ½ Mon ½ Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with five children (age 6 months to 16 years)
 Occupation: Sarong weaver
 Address: Mudon Town, Mon State
 Interviewed: 5 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

Thirteen days ago, I was arrested while on my way back home from my sister's house. It was about 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. A fireman and a policeman told me to go to the office of Town Council to discuss something, and as soon as I arrived there they arrested me. At night, I was sent by train to Moulmein. After that, they sent me by boat. People called them the "Moulmein boats". There were about 500-600 people on the boat from different places. The boat took us to Pa-an *[Moulmein is near the mouth of Salween River, and Pa-an is further up river in Karen State]*. Then they took us from Pa-an to Hill 962 *[by truck]*. At first I had to cut bamboo, then I had to carry rice from Hill 962 to the barren mountain, back and forth. I saw some 20 other people there from Moulmein. The soldiers divided us into various groups. I didn't have to carry weapons because of my age, but I saw other porters carrying weapons and ammunitions. I didn't see any one being beaten, because it was mostly elderly with me. The eldest was 60. We had to work in the morning, or if they need something to be done then they called us. We didn't work all the time because of our age, but the younger men had to work all the time. I had to carry bamboo to make fence or about ten viss *[16 kg]* of rice. The food was mostly rice and salt. They gave one milk-tin of rice for one day. Most of the night I couldn't sleep because of the space. There wasn't enough space to lie down.

I was with a battalion under LID 11. I carried for five days, then I wanted to run away. I discussed with other porters. At about 6:00 p.m., while we were taking a rest, five of us started running into the jungle. Some soldiers shot at us with their guns, and we split into two groups. I was alone, and the other four went together. I didn't know whether they were here or not. I arrived here alone. I had to sleep one

night in the jungle. Early in the morning, I started walking and I arrived at the [Moei] river near Mae Tha Waw at about 11:00 a.m. I arrived here and met the Karens. I don't know how to go back. I will go along with the other porters until we reach a town, then we'll separate. They took 700 Ks in cash from me which I brought from home when I was arrested. But I supposed they would give it back to me when I go home. If I am arrested again on my way home, that's my bad luck.

Interview: 17-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture, Disappearance

Name : U Than Htay
 Age: 48
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burmese Muslim
 Religion: Islam
 Family: Married with one child (age 14 years)
 Occupation: Trishaw driver
 Address: Kawkareik Town, Mon State
 Interviewed: 4 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was arrested on 25 January. The police, the section headman and soldiers came to my house and said they wanted to check how many people were staying in my house. Then at about 3:30 p.m., they stopped their TE-11 truck beside the road and ordered me, "Please come to the police station. If you have any problems, come and we'll discuss them at the police station. Get into the truck." At that time, I could see my house but I couldn't contact my family. I asked them, "Why are you arresting me?". They said, "We don't know. We just have an order to arrest you." I didn't have any guest in my house, only my family. I hadn't done anything, but at that time they were doing the same to all other houses. I didn't know. There were many soldiers surrounding our area between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. When they saw people, they arrested them. They wanted to catch all the men in the whole area. They also arrested some women, but when I arrived they had released them.

I was arrested by the soldiers from IBs 230 and 231, and the police. They took me to the headquarters of LID 22 at Myaingalay. There I had to stay on the truck, and after a short time they drove off. We went to a place where they already had a camp for porters. They called it Klo Ka Dee. There were about 5,000 or 6,000 people there. The camp was fenced and surrounded by soldiers. I slept one night there, then I had to carry six 81mm mortar shells. I had to carry for eight days. I didn't know where we were going, because I had to carry at night. I had to carry the shells as soon as the night fell until early the following morning. Then when we arrived there, we put them down and we had to carry other loads back to their camp. We had to go back from different way. Even in the day time, we had no free time and I haven't slept. We had not time to sleep because we had to carry back and forth to the hill all the

time. Even if we had some rest time, I could not sleep because the soldiers kept calling us to check on us. They called out our names every ten or fifteen minutes. We only got a rest at cooking time, for about two hours. We got no rest but the soldiers could rest by turn. Whenever they went to a new place, the battalion commander let the first group of soldiers rest and called another group of soldiers, and we had to go with them.

We got one meal after four days, only a little rice. When I got a chance to do water-carrying duty I could drink water, but this opportunity was very rare. When I could get this duty I had to buy water from the soldiers, 30 Ks for one milk-tin [*about 200ml*]. When I had no more money, I couldn't drink water. If a porter tried to drink water while crossing a stream, the soldiers would beat him. If you didn't get permission from them, they would kill you.

I saw porters being beaten because they couldn't carry. The soldiers beat them with sticks and rifle butts on the body, wherever they can hit, on the head or back. I was beaten. I couldn't see the path very well at night, so I missed the path and went into a bamboo grove and then I couldn't catch up with the other porters, so I was beaten on the back of my head with a rifle butt. The strap of my basket was protecting my head, but still it was painful. Then, they showed me the right way to go to catch up with the others.

I saw people burying dead bodies beside the path, but I could not tell whether they were soldiers or porters. I was afraid to ask them [*as he saw no fighting along the way, it is almost certain that the dead were porters*]. I saw one porter getting seriously ill, and he was too weak to take medicine. I thought, "He will die for sure." The soldiers did nothing for him. The porters reported about him to the officer, but he didn't do anything. He just kept walking around. They left him behind along the way when we rested near the camp.

We were with about nine or ten battalions — LIBs 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208 and 209. Sometimes there were seven porters for one soldier and sometimes ten porters per soldier. I didn't see any fighting. When the soldiers were playing cards, I escaped with two other men from Kawkaireik. Ten of us escaped altogether, and then we met two more on the way. We went upstream to the hills, then I looked from the top of the mountain and saw the direction of the sun, so I thought I could find the way to Thailand. It took us two nights, then we arrived at a place [*on the Moei river*] with huts and a boat station. I spent one night there, then I went to Baw Noh monastery [*in Thailand*]. We got food and cooked there, then we came here yesterday. The soldiers didn't say where we were carrying, but I think it was around Manerplaw. All the soldiers were SLORC. We had to carry for many different battalions. I had never been a porter before. At home I had to pay 100 Ks every month for porter fees [*protection money to avoid from being taken as a porter*]. Every week, I also had to pay three separate fees' of seventy-five, one hundred, one hundred and fifty kyats. Now I'm going back home because of my child. I'll have to ask and check with people which way is safe.

Interview: 18-HRV: Child, Detention, Slavery, Torture,

Name : U San Kyaw
 Age: 48
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Pa-O
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with three children (age 19 to 30 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kawkareik Town, Mon State
 Interviewed: 4 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

My eldest son has been a monk for 10 years. My youngest daughter has already finished her 10th standard exam. I own a plot of land. I was arrested in January 1995, I'm not sure the date. Early in the morning, while I was threshing the paddy with my cow, soldiers from IB 97 came and arrested me. They didn't say why. They pointed their guns at me and told me to get into the truck. They arrested six men, but later on we were separated. They sent us directly to Kyon Doe, then to Jai and Hlaing Bwe by truck. We changed trucks, and that truck took us into the jungle. I didn't know the name of the place, I only knew it was a camp of the soldiers. We had one day rest, then the following morning we started carrying. I had to carry six 81 mm mortar shells. It was very heavy. My shoulders are still very sore [*he still has scars on his shoulders*]. They kicked me in the waist with their boots twice, and it is a bit painful now.

We had to carry by day and by night. I didn't know where we were carrying to. We just climbed up and down one mountain, again and again. There were many porters from Kawkareik. There was not enough space to sleep. We were like cows in the corral. Some porters had to sleep standing up. It was very crowded and the soldiers were surrounding us. There were two gaps in the fence, and there were two sentries at each gap. If a porter needed to go to the toilet, he had to ask permission from a soldier. Within four days, they only gave us one meal. There was not enough to sleep, to eat and to live. Every day two or three people died. I was lucky to arrive here. Porters who had already walked many days died of sickness or exhaustion. I saw two dead porters. We had to bury them. One was from Kyon Doe Nga Dah, and the other was from Yebyu Township [*in Tenasserim Division*]. One was the same age as me, and the other was about 40. If a sick porter asked for medicine, the soldiers swore at him. They said the medicine was for the soldiers, not the porters. To get a cup of water cost 20 or 30 Ks. I bought a cup of water once. I only had 100 Ks. I'd sold some paddy but I hadn't given the money to my family because I was keeping it to drink some toddy juice [*palm wine*]. But I had no chance to drink toddy juice because they arrested me.

The youngest porters was about 13 years old and the eldest was 71. There were over

2,000 porters — about 1,500 civilians and the rest were prisoners. There were over 200 soldiers. The ratio was one soldier for every 10 or 15 porters. I went in front of them. The porters who were behind were beaten worse than me. I was with Thein Zayat-based LIB 207 which is under the command of LID 22. I carried for four days, then I escaped while we were cutting bamboo and the soldiers were playing cards. I talked to the other porters, and six of us ran away, then we split up and there were two of us. I felt so hopeless. I didn't care where I went, I just ran. If the soldiers saw me they would have killed me. I climbed up the mountains, big and small, again and again. On the way, I expected to see some villages so I could ask for food, but I didn't see any. We had to sleep one night between the mountains and we were very hungry. Then we saw a stream. We drank some water, then climbed up a mountain and back down again. The following morning, we followed a stream, then we saw a river [*the Moei*]. We crossed the river and slept on the sand-bank. I couldn't see any village. I'm 48 years old, but I'd never been there before. The following morning, I found a place that had many banana plants and I asked for food. They guided me to a village where I had a meal and went to the monastery. Then they sent me here by car. Now I'm going back. There is no man in my family. My only son is a monk, and my daughter who has already passed her exam will go to college. I'm worried for them. I can't even eat very well. Nobody knew I'd been taken as a porter. I've never been a porter before. We had to pay them 80 or 100 or 150 Ks each time, four times a month. The highest amount was 500 Ks. But this time they didn't ask. They didn't want money, they only wanted porters.

Interview: 19-HRV: Detention, Refugees, Torture, Disappearance

Name : U Mya Aung
 Age: 28
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Chin
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Longkadoo village, Paletwa Township, Chin State
 Source: KHRG

Two days before we came here, Coy 1 of SLORC IB 376 called us to Doh Chaung Wa village. They called 12 villagers to go, but only three people could go because the villagers were very busy in their fields. So only three of us went. The other two were Maung Sein from Ohn Thee Wa village and Tin Soe from Paut Htoo Wa village. Then the soldiers said, "We called for 12 villagers. Why didn't you comply with our order?" So they started beating us. Then they forced three of us to saw wood to build their fence, but we didn't know how to saw it. Then, the soldiers accused us of being against them, they tied up two of us with our hands behind our backs and punched and kicked all of us several times. They beat me worse than the other two. At that time, we were so scared and we tried to give them a bribe of 1,000

Ks for our release. After they got 1,000 Ks, they released us.

When I got back to my village the situation got worse. Because the wife, daughter and niece of the Paletwa police inspector, U Law Her, who came to our village and stayed at the village headman's house disappeared. These women said they came to trade. We didn't know where they went after they stayed in our village. Maybe the rebels kidnapped them. Because of this, our village headman U Ram Doh was arrested by Capt Htun Way from Coy 1 of IB 376. They took him to Pone Yaung Wa army camp, and after they got there they asked him questions: "Where are the three women?" The village head told them he didn't know anything about it, and they tied his hands and his legs and sank him in water again and again, so many times. After he couldn't say anything anymore, the soldiers punched him, kicked him and beat him with rifle butts so many times. We heard that they broke his nose and that he was bleeding all over his body and his face. Now we don't know whether he's dead or alive.

The day after the arrest of our headman, the SLORC Army sent a message with a man to our village telling us to send these three women back to Paletwa Town as soon as possible or else they would kill all of our villagers [*this messenger (a conscripted villager) also described how the headman was tortured by them*]. As we didn't know anything about these three women, we couldn't do anything. At 9:00 p.m. on 28 December 1994, the villagers decided that we would all have to flee from our village. Some went to India, some went to Cha Krau and we came here to Kessephai together with 20 families, 123 of us altogether. We reached Kessephai [*in Rajshahi Province, Bangladesh*] the following morning, on 29 December. Most of the people in our group were elderly and children. After we reached here, we had problems to live. We stayed at the village head's house and another house, and they collected rice from the other villagers to feed us. They would finish collecting it within one or two days. We didn't know how we would survive. We had to leave all of our belongings, cattle, rice, and other crops in our village. We couldn't carry anything with us. We heard that the soldiers came to our village the following day and took everything. The village where we are staying now is still very close to the Burmese border, so we still have to worry for our safety and we had to plead to The Hi Ni village militia to help protect us from Burmese soldiers. Some of our people are sick [*it is a cold winter in the Chin Hills*] and there is no medicine. We don't know how we will survive.

Interview: 20-HRV: Detention, Refugees, Torture, Disappearance

Name : U Myo Thant
 Age: 40
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Chin
 Religion: Buddhist

Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Longkadoo village, Paletwa Township, Chin State
 Source: KHRG

For a long time, we lived comfortably in our village and we had no problem with our farms. But last week, just before we fled here, our headman went to Paletwa Town. When he came back, three women followed him. These women were the wives of policemen. They said they were coming to the village to trade. They slept one night in our village and then they disappeared. We didn't know where they went. Then Coy 1 of SLORC IB 376 called our headman to their Pone Yaung Wa camp because of the disappearance of three women. When our headman arrived at their camp, the SLORC Army asked him where the three women were. He told them the women had slept one night at his house, then the following day he didn't see them anymore so he didn't know where they had gone. Then the soldiers tied his hands behind his back and sank him in water. Then they asked him more questions. The headman told them he didn't know anything about the situation of the three women, so they pushed him under the water many times and started beating him. They tied his arms and his legs with a rope, and they punched him and kicked him many times. They hit him with a rifle butt. After the last blow one of his ribs was broken, his nose had been crushed by the rifle butt and his whole body was swelling up. Then the army ordered him to send the three women to them. "If not", they said, "We are going to kill all the villagers."

The following day, on 28 December 1994, the army sent a man named Mao Char Mu, 40 years old, from Pone Yaung Wa village to our village to give us this message and to take back our answer [*he also described how the headman was tortured by them*]. They ordered the villagers to send the three women immediately to Paletwa town, and threatened "If not, we are going to kill all the villagers." We didn't know how to solve this problem. There was no choice for us. We were afraid we would be killed that night, so we had to run away. Some of the villagers ran to India and some to Kessephai [in Bangladesh]. My family and 12 other families ran here to Cha Krau [a village in Bangladesh]. We are 97 altogether. We left Longkadoo village on 28 December at about 8:00 p.m. We had to walk the whole night, then we arrived here at Cha Krau on 29 December. We had no relatives here, and we had no food, so it was difficult for us to stay here and we had to face many troubles. A man from the village let us stay at the primary school. As we had to flee immediately from SLORC, we couldn't carry any food or blankets or clothing. We had to leave behind our cattle, pigs and paddy.

Right now I just get too tired trying to think about how to solve our problems and continue our lives. We don't even know if our headman is dead or not. It is impossible to go back to our village. We dared not try to survive there anymore. [*The 97 people are currently staying in the primary school, a building of 16ft wide by 24 ft long, in Cha Krau village, Rarjamati District, Bangladesh. Many of them have bad colds from a particularly cold winter, and some are also suffering from malaria. They have no access*

to medical treatment, and no food except what the local villagers can give them.]

Interview: 21-HRV: Detention, Torture, Refugee, Judiciary

Name : Maung Ko
 Age: 27
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Chin
 Religion: Christian
 Occupation: Student
 Address: Matupi Township, Chin State
 Source: KHRG

Two of my friends — Thin Lian Klai and Thin Lian Sun — and I went to Mizo Yapet in India to make some money during the school holidays. At that time, I was studying at the high school of Matupi Township. Along our way between Paletwa and Phai Chaung, we saw many other people going as well. When we reached Phai Chaung, we met with SLORC IB 20 led by Capt Zaw Win. They interrogated us, accused us of being collaborators with the rebels and detained us. We denied that we were collaborating with rebels. Although we tried hard to explain to them that we were just going to trade chickens in Mizo Yapet to get money for school, they didn't accept this. They started beating and torturing us. After punching and kicking us many times, they covered my head and sank me in water, then they pulled my ribs apart *[they reached around him from behind, grabbed the right and left sides of his lower ribcage and tried to wrench them apart]*. They used the "riding a bicycle" torture *[a common SLORC torture — the victim is forced to squat in a riding position and pretend he is riding a bicycle or motorcycle, often also being forced to make honking noises, etc., under the torturer's instructions such as "Turn left! Stop! You didn't stop soon enough!" — the victim is then severely beaten]*, and they also forced us to squat as if we were shitting or pissing for a long time. They forced us to stand for the whole day and said, "You have to confess. I am going to beat you up until you confess." They put three bags over my head and then they beat me on the back several times with a rifle butt. Then they beat my legs 100 or 200 times with a cane stick. Finally we had to confess. We said that we were collaborators with rebels.

Then Capt Zaw Win sent us to the court and charged with four criminal offences under Section 17/1 [of Unlawful Association Act]. We had no opportunity for defence. The Paletwa court said, "We cannot sentence for political offences", so they transferred us to Sittwe [Akyab] Township in Arakan State. In that court, we had an opportunity to defend ourselves. In the court, we told them that we were not collaborators with the rebels. The judge said to the army men, "You must show evidence. Unless you can produce any evidence, we cannot convict them of being against the country." Then the SLORC Army sent a man to the court. The judge

asked him, "Can you give any evidence against them? If not, we can't convict them under this Section, and we can't detain them. If you can't produce any evidence, we will release them." The army had no evidence. Then the judge said to us, "I'm sure that you are not rebel collaborators. I could release you now by my authority. But I am so sad. I cannot do that for the time being because the army ordered me not to release you and to put you in jail. According to the law, you are clear of the crime, you are not guilty. But as you know, our country is governed by the army and we cannot do anything against their orders. Therefore, I will have to go along with this Section. It says you can be detained for three to seven years. I am going to sentence you to three years, because this is the shortest possible period of time. I am sure you are not guilty, and they couldn't produce any evidence. But I am daunted by the military authorities." So the judge sentenced us to three years and they sent us to Sittwe jail. They put three of us in a 10 ft by 5 ft dark cell for six months. They gave us one pot to be used as a latrine. Nothing else, only bare cement. When the pot got fuller and fuller, we asked them to empty it but they wouldn't. The smell of shit was all over the room. We had to suffer that for six months. In the dark room, my friend Lian Sun died of fever he got from being tortured. We tried to report it to the authorities before he died, but they ignored us. After he died, they took his dead body to the hospital and the doctor said that he died of a heart attack. After six months in the dark room, my other friend was transferred to a normal cell, but he was not allowed to meet or talk to any other prisoners. We could talk to each other during the shifts of labour, but the chains on our legs were very strong.

In the jail, an MI [*Military Intelligence*] man came to us and interrogated us often. Before he interrogated us, he made us spin around 20 times. We gradually got dizzy, and sometimes we vomited [*Note: in their weak condition, the effect of this would be much stronger than on a healthy person*]. Then they blindfolded us and took us walking for 20 minutes, but we didn't know where we were going. They brought two or three pills and forced us to swallow them. We couldn't protest. Half an hour after taking these pills, we gradually became very frightened and afraid. They always did this to us before interrogating us. The way the MI interrogates people is really terrible, not only to me but to the other prisoners as well. They put pins under our fingernails. They used nail-clippers to pinch our skin, and they poured very cold water on our foreheads. They have several ways of torture and interrogation. Even though you are not killed, you can never be normal again. The food in the jail is really bad. They fed us twice a day, half paddy [unhusked paddy, which has indigestible husks on it] and half rice. Whenever they could, they put soda in the rice gruel, so that if you leave this rice for one hour, it becomes liquid. If you eat only the rice they give you in jail, you cannot be alive for long. If you want better rice you have to pay at least 100 Ks per month to the jail warden. There was so much bribing going on in the jail. Unless you could bribe them, you had to suffer. In these conditions, at least four people died every month from starvation in Sittwe jail.

By the blessing of God, I was released from jail on 27 November 1994. I planned to

go and stay very happily with my family. But that was impossible, because the authorities gave me a card. The card means, "This person can be arrested at any time." It said I had to report to the police station every two weeks, and they could arrest me anytime, so I had no freedom. I don't want to be arrested again. I am so afraid of that. So I just stayed with my family for one day, and then I fled and came here. [*"Maung Ko" (from Matupi Township) and Thin Lian Klai (from Thantlang Township) were both released after serving their full sentences. Both have then fled to Bangladesh. Thin Lian Sun, from Chaung Do village, Kalay Township, died in the first six months in prison.*]

Religious Intolerance:

On 30 May 1994, copies of the following letter from Thantlang Township LORC were distributed both in Burmese and Chin languages throughout Thantlang Town and to all villages in Thantlang Township:

Township Law & Order Restoration Council

Thantlang Township

Letter No. 01/3-1/TLORC (Thantlang)

Date: 30 May 1994

To:

Chairmen

Quarter/Village Law & Order Restoration Council Groups

_____ Town /village

Subject: Announcing the provision of higher education to children

1) Regarding the above subject, with the purpose of giving higher education to the children for the development of areas in the State, those below the age of 14 years are to be provided with food and clothing, provided education, and trained to be refined individuals without any racial or religious discrimination.

2) Therefore, nationals should send their children either to Rangoon or to Thantlang Town in order that they may be educated. Bearing in mind the well-being of their children, they should announce the giving of higher education to the villages.

Remarks:

- (1) The State will provide lodging, board, clothes and all other necessities for the children who enrol for higher education.
- (2) These children should bring with them all their particulars: date of birth, names of parents, National Registration Card number, name of village, and religion.
- (3) These children should be sent to Thantlang Town before the end of July 1994.

(4) They will be allowed to worship and practice their own religion.

Attached is a copy of a translation in Chin language

[Sd.]
(for) Chairman
(Chin Za Bone, Secretary)

Some of the Christian Chin in the township believed the announcement, and at least nine children were entrusted into the care of SLORC. They were taken first to Thantlang Town, then to Rangoon. Since the end of July 1994 there has been no communication whatsoever from or about them. They have been completely cut off from their parents. When the parents inquired, they learned that all of their children were living at Ka Ba Aye Buddhist monastery in Rangoon. This was communicated to the Chin Christian community in Rangoon. In the first week of December 1994, they went to the abbot of the monastery and asked permission to see these children, but permission was refused.

In the third week of December 1994, two representatives from Chin State went down to Rangoon to attend the SLORC's national convention and learned about the Chin children. They went to the authorities and asked permission to see the children, and they were granted permission. When they met the children at Ka Ba Aye monastery, they found that the boys had had their heads shaved to become Buddhist novices, while the girls had repeatedly been pressured to have their heads shaved to become Buddhist nuns, but so far the girls had refused. All of the children cried and begged to be taken home when the two representatives met them. However, the children are still being held at the monastery. *[Note: Not only is SLORC using the promise of education to steal Chin children, Burmanise them and coerce or force them to convert to Buddhism, but there is also a further danger that as soon as the boys reach the age 14 or 15 they are very likely to be conscripted into the Burma Army. SLORC has used similar tricks in the past in the areas such as the Irrawaddy Delta, where it has invited young Karen boys to sporting tournaments only to kidnap them and force them into the army. The Tatmadaw has a history of grabbing orphans and other small boys and housing them at army camps, indoctrinating them and using them as errand boys until they are big enough to be soldiers. As Cambodian civilians learned from the Khmer Rouge, such kidnapped and brainwashed children can make the most terrifying of teenage soldiers.]*

Interview: 22-HRV: Relocation, Religion, Execution, Displacement, Livelihood, Refugee

Name : Saw Kwa Lah
Age: 62
Sex : Male

Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married with two children (age 24 and 30)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Bwa Der village, Papun Township, Papun District, Karen State
 Source: KHRG

Saw Kwa Lah's village was in a KNU-controlled area which had later been taken by SLORC. He is now a refugee in Thailand.

I lived in Bwa Der for 17 years. I first came there because of the activities of the Burma Army. Now I've come here because the Yellow Headbands [DKBA] shot and killed a man. They couldn't stand the sight of the Baptists. There were 30 or 40 Christian families in Bwa Der. We had to evacuate in 1992 because SLORC came and fought against the KNU. But in 1993, we could go back. In 1993, people had built a new pagoda at Lay Kay Ko. When they dedicated it, many people went. It was the same month that they wanted to build a pagoda somewhere around Meh Leh Kee and Walter forbade them [*at that time, some villagers and monks from inside Burma insisted on building pagodas at some key KNLA ridge-top positions. KNLA Maj Walter did not allow it because the pagodas would be used by SLORC soldiers atop Sleeping Dog Mountain to sight their mortars on the KNLA positions. Many people believe the instigation to build these pagodas originally came from SLORC. After permission was refused, SLORC capitalised the incident as religious persecution, and spread rumours in the villages that Walter had "killed monks and destroyed pagodas".*] At the dedication, monks said to the Buddhists and Animists, "The war has been going on for many years. Do you want to carry brick and sand for a pagoda, or do you want to keep carrying the revolution's load of ammunition and go to war? If you carry the pagoda's load there will be peace. If you carry the revolution's load, war will go on." So in 1993 they stopped helping the revolution because of what the monk told them. Then in 1994 the KNU tried to explain and organise them, but they refused to listen. People said the war was caused by the Christians. In the end, it entangled the Baptists, and we were all unhappy.

People went around organising in each village, and villagers went and stayed at the pagoda. If they went and stayed at the pagoda, they didn't have to do anything, no work. The whole families from different villages went and stayed near the pagoda, at Da Ko Law Kloh. There is a monastery near the pagoda. There are 40 monks. The monks said that if the young people put on the yellow robe and become novices, they won't have to join the KNU army or be soldiers. So, young people and even some of the soldiers became monks.

The village headman and the village Buddhist leader said the Christians must go also. They said if we didn't go, we'd be killed or harmed. They went round and threatened the people, so Christians as well as non-Christians got scared and went. If they didn't go and they didn't become vegetarians, they'd be killed. That's what

the leaders said: "Someone will kill you." They frightened the villagers, so people didn't know what to do. They are just hill people, Christian and non-Christian, so some of them moved. I stayed in the village.

This monk [*apparently U Thuzana, now DKBO chairman*] wanted everyone in our area to be vegetarians. They started forcing people to be vegetarians, so the other monks didn't agree with them. They kept trying to organise all the villagers in the hills. They started becoming more and more violent. They threatened us all: "It won't be easy for you if you don't go. We'll cut your throat, we'll mash you like chillies". The people are hill people, so they don't understand anything. This started in September or October 1994, then it became worse in November. It got worse and worse. They said, "Christianity is white man's religion. We must drive them away. White man's religion is not good."

The big trouble exploded in December 1994. They organised people by force. They threatened people, so people followed them without knowing anything. They confiscated KNU soldiers' weapons. A lot of people came through and were going to Thu Mwe Hta and Myaing Gyi Ngu [*the two DKBA bases at the time*], hundreds of people. They had no understanding, they were just told to go so they went. Later they started killing people. At first they were threatening the Christians with words, not guns, then in December they confiscated KNU guns, and their villagers [*converts*] took up arms and went to villages. Everyone was scared. They shot people, so we didn't know what to think. Would they harm us? We were nervous. When the monks start to carry guns — what can we do? In my village, one man was killed, but they also killed others at Thu Mwe Hta. After they killed Bo Kyaw Aye and Ner Ghaw [*captured Karen soldiers*] at Thu Mwe Hta, they became very rough. The man in my village was a soldier in civilian dress, just staying in the village. He was a Christian. First they confiscated the guns in the village — some villagers had shotguns that they had bought [*for hunting*]. Then they went to the upper village, called Maw Leh Meh Hta. The village man was standing and chatting close to his house after breakfast, and they recognised him so they shot him. He was Pah Day's son, his name was Saw Lweh Mu. He was 18 years old. I heard they also killed one man in Meh Ku Hta and one in Meh Nyo Hta, on the other side of the mountain. They also threatened the people there and shot at their houses, so the people were afraid and couldn't stay.

They stole things from the shops whose owners were Christians, and didn't pay for them. They stayed near the village. Then later when we evacuated a short distance away, they came into the village, took away our things and ate up everything. They rummaged around and tore up our books and Bibles. They poked the pictures of Christ through the eyes. They also threatened the Animists with guns. Some followed them, but some didn't understand so they just stayed in the village. They forced them to follow and said, "If you don't follow, we will kill you." They shot their guns. The situation got worse day by day so that people began to flee. The Christians ran away. I left in the first week of January 1995, because I heard the SLORC troops

were coming. I heard SLORC were in Paw Hta, quite nearby. I fled to Mae Paw Mu Hta [*refugee camp on the Thai side of the Salween river*]. I brought my family because I was worried for them. We managed to bring cooking pots, rice and blankets. Each member of the family carried whatever they could. Many things were left behind.

Then on 26 January 1995 we had to leave Mae Paw Mu Hta because DKBA came into the camp and started to shoot, torture and force the people to go back with them as they pleased. They shot with their guns, even though our refugee camp is on the Thai side. They came and took sacks of rice and threatened the people with their guns. So the people ran in all directions and were not able to take the rice. They fired their guns in the air. When people went back to get their rice, the soldiers shot at them. Then we came step by step to Tee Law Thi Kloh and we had no idea what was happening later.

Every able man who joins DKBA gets a gun. I heard they give 600 Ks per month. People who join DKBA but don't want to carry a gun have to sign a paper promising that they will not do anything against DKBA, and they have to carry this paper with them all the time. Some people joined them, soldiers and villagers, and later on they didn't agree with DKBA's rules and wanted to get out. But they're afraid of DKBA and its rules, so they were in despair. DKBA promised that families who follow them would receive rice and other help from SLORC. Many people who followed them had to go to Papun and they were given rice at the SLORC Army camp of IBs19 and 35. They receive it for free. DKBA got guns and uniforms from SLORC. I heard they had a yellow, white and blue badge on one shoulder, and a SLORC badge on the other. When they were in my village, they didn't have uniforms yet. Some wore yellow headbands around their head, and others tied them around their guns. I saw their monks carrying guns in the village. They carried AK47's, M16's, the guns that the soldiers confiscated.

Interview: 23-HRV: Religion, Execution, Relocation, Displacement, Livelihood, Child, Slavery, Refugee

Name :	Saw Kaw Mu Heh
Age:	26
Sex :	Male
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married with one child (age four months)
Occupation:	Farmer
Address:	Meh Bpa village, Papun Township, Papun District, Karen State
Source:	KHRG

Saw Kaw Mu Heh's village was in a KNU-controlled area which had later been

taken by SLORC. He is now a refugee in Thailand.

That group that joined with SLORC [DKBA] came into our village. They distributed leaflets to the villagers. The leaflets said the Christians oppressed the Buddhists, so young Buddhists were revolting against the Christians. A monk named Pa Ni Sa said he would disarm all KNU soldiers and disbanded the KNU organisation, after that he would go against SLORC and take all their weapons too. They said as the leaders from Headquarters [Manerplaw] killed many hundreds of Buddhists, they were going to kill all the Christians in our village. They said that the people in our village should only be Buddhists. Kyaw Kaw said that. He used to be a villager. He said the leaders from Manerplaw had killed 10 monks. Kyaw Kaw and other people who were vegetarians said people who eat meat must stop eating meat or else they would be killed. This happened when the fighting started [*in December 1994, when the DKBA started fighting against KNU*]. Kyaw Kaw passed through the village, going house to house to tell these things to all Buddhists. He didn't tell anything to the Christians, but when he found us he quarrelled and abused us. There were only two or three Christian families in our village. We had a [Buddhist] monastery there, but we didn't have any monks. After Kyaw Kaw threatened us, some of the Buddhists threatened us. Not only with words — they also stole our things such as clothes and boxes. They came when we were at home. When the villagers came to take my things, they pointed their guns at me. Some were soldiers and some were villagers who joined DKBA. They wore Burmese soldiers' uniforms and Burmese soldiers' boots, and their insignia was also Burmese. They had Burmese insignia on one arm and DKBA insignia on the other. They had AK [AK47], AR [*a shortened version of an M16*], and RPG's [*shoulder-launched rocket-propelled grenades*]. About 20 of them came to my house in the daytime. It was round about 27 or 28 of January 1995, just after Manerplaw fell. I arrived at Pu Mya Lu [*on the Thai side of the Salween*] on 30 January. One Christian family became Buddhist, and they didn't do anything to them. The other Christians escaped. Pu Law Eh's family came with me. In other villages like Paw Mu Der, I knew for sure that some Christian families there had to become Buddhists too.

They made problems for Buddhists who eat meat, too. They killed my elder brother. He was Animist. He was killed after we fled our village. My brother who became a monk was under threat because of not being a vegetarian. The man who saw it said he was shot dead. His name was Saw Ghay Say. He was over 30. He was not my real brother, he was my wife's brother. The Buddhist families who didn't join DKBA fled to Law Say Naw. There were about 20 families. They were planning to run further to Taw Tee Kwee, but I heard they were driven away by DKBA [*possibly forcibly relocated to Myaing Gyi Ngu area*]. I didn't know what happened to them. Almost half of the villagers became vegetarians. All the men took guns to fight. They disarmed the KNU soldiers who didn't join the DKBA — that's how they got the guns. I didn't see any Burmese soldiers in the village when it all started, but other people said they did. Fighting started behind the village, Karen soldiers against DKBA. All the ones who joined DKBA went to the fighting. I was afraid, so I ran

into the forest. After staying several days in Way Baw, I went to Mae Let Hta. As my wife was staying in Meh Bpa, I went back to get her. In Mae Let Hta, they tried to catch me and I ran away. They shot at me. I ran with four friends. None of us was hit. We went to Ma Mu, then to Wah Der, and then I crossed into Thailand. In Wah Der there was also fighting, so I couldn't stay there and I crossed over at Mae Paw Mu Hta. We had to sneak across because SLORC had already occupied part of Meh Paw Mu Hta [*Meh Paw Mu Hta village on Burma side of the river, not the refugee camp opposite on Thai side*]. Then we went to Meh Po [*the Mae Paw Mu Hta refugees moved to Meh Po*].

When the truck was shot [*en route to Huai Heng*] we were leaving Mae Po. We were in the fourth truck, behind the one that was hit. I didn't see anything, I only heard the shooting. When we arrived there I saw the dead bodies. They were in the truck, and the driver was dead on the steering wheel. I saw a child on his mother in the back. The other people from the truck had gone already. We went back and we did not hear any more shooting. My first cousin is Buddhist. His name is Taw Kho and he is 20 years old. He joined DKBA. He witnessed the deaths of his three companions who joined DKBO. SLORC accused the three men and created misunderstandings, then all three were killed by their own group. They were shot dead. Taw Kho had to shoot one of them himself. Then one time when they met with SLORC, he was accused of having Christian relatives and they threatened to kill him, so he fled. Taw Kho was just a villager, not a soldier.

Members of DKBA get salary from SLORC. Every single man was given 1,000 Ks per month [*note: this is 250 Ks more than SLORC private receives*], and those who got married were given 300 Ks plus every arrangement for their families. But the villagers received nothing. My wife's younger brother had to go as a porter for DKBA but he was not paid any money. He had to carry a very heavy load, and he didn't get enough food. He had to find food in the forest. He was a porter for 10 days. He is Buddhist.

Interview: 24-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Slavery, Execution, Torture, Women, Child, Religion, Refugee

Name : Saw Htoo Thaw
 Age: 33
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married with three children (age 2 and 7 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Hlaing Bwe Township, Karen State
 Source: KHRG

Saw Htoo Thaw was a refugee in Thailand who returned to Burma in January 1995 and was sent to Myaing Gyi Ngu. He escaped and returned to Thailand after one month and a half there. Now he is living in a hideout in Thailand in fear of DKBA reprisals.

I came to stay in Thailand because of the civil war, maybe 12 years ago. My older brother was living there too. He went back to Burma first, then he came back and called me to go with him. He told me that the situation in Burma was improved then, so I followed him. But when I arrived there, it was not improved like he had told me so I was afraid to stay and I came back here about 15 days ago [10 March]. This time my brother could not come back. I was not afraid in the refugee camp in Thailand, but my brother told me it was okay back in Burma so I went. First, I crossed at Mae Tha Waw [SLORC position across the Moei river where refugees have been told to return to]. At Mae Tha Waw, all the soldiers who checked us were Burmese, exception of three members of DKBA who are Karens. The Burmese soldiers looked and searched our bags. They took everything and they asked questions. They asked, "Are you a good person or a bad one? Did you come here to be good or to be bad? Did you come here to demonstrate?" Oh, many many questions. Along the way, whenever we reached a place, they asked questions, again and again. When we reached Pa-an there was a checkpoint, and when we reached the monk's place they also asked us questions. They took all our belongings and our blankets. We were left with only the clothes on our bodies. They wouldn't let us take even a sewing needle to the monk's place.

At Mae Tha Waw, there were more than 200 of us. There were four trucks and more than 50 persons in each truck. I was with my wife and children. To get into the trucks is free of charge. The trucks proceeded directly to Pa-an Town. We were hoping to live around there and farm, but our plan was not successful. They didn't help us anything. We stayed in Pa-an only one night and then the SLORC sent all of us to Khaw Taw [Myaing Gyi Ngu] by boat [up the Salween River]. At Khaw Taw, I saw many things. I couldn't remember or tell it all. I saw many soldiers, SLORC and DKBA mixed together. There were only bamboo grove and car roads, and bamboo grove and car roads, and they marked a plot of land for each house. The Burmese soldiers said, "It will be like a town". Each plot was about 40 plah [60 feet] across. Some people who arrived there before us had already built houses, but not so many. Some of them came from Thu Mwe Hta [Confluence of Salween and Moei River]. The people from Thu Mwe Hta and Naw Ta [near SLORC's southern front against Manerplaw] arrived first. There were about 200 or 300 houses. When we arrived we had to find a place by ourselves. Some quarrelled with others and started threatening each other with knives because they didn't have enough space. You had to stay in your place for some time until the Burmese came and measured it. Only after that you were allowed to start building a house. We had to live in the bushes. The Burmese gave construction materials only to the families of DKBA soldiers so that they had a chance to build the houses. But it was not for the people. We had to build houses for the soldiers first. We cut bamboo one by one for our house. After

we had cut them, the soldiers came and took them and made us build the soldiers' houses first. We weren't allowed to build our own houses. There were many more soldiers' families than families like ours. For the people like us, if we had two sons or two daughters then one of them had to go help the soldiers. As my children were too young, I had to go myself. Only when all the soldiers' houses were finished you were able to build your own house. There was only one stream and we were all using it. People were taking bath and washing clothes in it so it tasted of detergent and soap when we drank it. Then we dug a well. To get food we had to walk a very long way to the monastery. The Burmese gave it. It was only rice, salt and sesame paste. One family member had to go and get the food for the family. Each family got three big tins of rice for one month [*this is enough to feed three persons only*]. It was not enough. They only gave it to us once [*because he was only there 1½ months*]. Rice was all gone one day after it arrived as there were many new comers.

Everyday, they took 30 people from each section to go with the Burmese and be porters for two weeks. They didn't give anything to the porters. It was "voluntary work". If people didn't go they would be subject to beating. They're not afraid to kill us. They killed many of us. I didn't have to go because my child was sick, but otherwise I would have had to go. Instead, I had to help in the camp. I had to carry weapons and rice. The rice and the weapons transported by boat along the Salween River and we had to carry them to the monastery. We were ordered by the monk, but the Burmese soldiers were also in the monastery. The soldiers were also under the monk's command. [*Note: there has been speculation among the KNU that some of the "monks" may be SLORC officers.*]

They took other porters to 3rd Brigade [*Nyaunglebin District, far to the north*], Kloh Wah and Wan Kha [*Kawmoora*]. The porters had to carry weapons, not rice. Because whenever the soldiers arrived anywhere they took rice from that place [*porters had to carry rice at the front-line, but not when they left Khaw Taw*]. The people were gone for 15 days as porters. Sometimes the soldiers killed them secretly. When I was coming back to Thailand, I saw two dead people along the way. I saw that they had killed these two people, but the soldiers had told us they got sick and died. They didn't take women as porters, but the women had to build pagodas at Khaw Taw. They had to carry sand and rocks.

Each family also had to give one person to be a soldier, man or woman. They forced us. They said I had to become a soldier. They even registered my name in the book to become a soldier. When I saw that, I was afraid to be a soldier so I fled at night and came back here. When people became soldiers they had to sign a paper and make a vow with medicine. The monk gave them some medicine to drink, to all the soldiers. A man like me with a family received 1,000 Ks per month as a soldier. Each boy or girl who went as a soldier get 500 Ks per month. They must be 15 years old. The girls got training together with the boys. I knew that before I came back, they sent some to Meh Bpa [*near Manerplaw*]. Men and women mixed together. The women had to cook for them at the front-line. They also sent many women to

Wan Kha [Kawmoora] to cook. If they were forced to go, they had to go. If they were forced to cook, they had to cook.

It looked like a refugee camp. There was no school or hospital yet, but they planned to build them. There were many people from everywhere. They are Karen, Burmese and Muslims. There were people from Pa-an and Rangoon who were living there as traders. Most of the Karen villagers there were Buddhists, but there were also Christians. All the Christians who came there converted to Buddhism except my family. All were the same, it was not dangerous to be Christian there. They forced everyone to be vegetarians. Some people ate meat secretly, but most of them obeyed. When they caught people eating meat they put them in a place like a jail, near the monastery. They bound them in the stocks [*mediaeval-style leg stocks*]. I saw it myself. They kept them like that for one or two weeks. People who drank a lot got one or two warnings, then if they didn't obey they got the same treatment.

They didn't allow anyone to farm or do anything like that. We didn't farm, but we had to help the monks in the monastery. The monk normally stayed in the monastery. Only once, he came out of the monastery for a walk. He had three bodyguards in front of him, three behind him and three on either side, altogether 12 bodyguards. The bodyguards were soldiers. The monk had two pistols and a walkie-talkie. There were many, many monks in the monastery but we couldn't go and see them because there were three rows of guards around it. I only saw the leader of the monks. There were a lot of soldiers in Khaw Taw, Burmese and Karen all mixed together. One house for one soldier. The Burmese soldiers slept nearby but not in Khaw Taw itself. They organised training for the Karen soldiers. In Khaw Taw the monk gave military training, with guns. I didn't know his name.

They always told bad stories about our home areas. They told them in Burmese. I didn't know what they said, because I didn't care. In the camp, I knew there would be a mass uprising between DKBA and SLORC. While I was there, I saw DKBA soldiers fighting among themselves once or twice. DKBA made false accusations against each other. DKBA fought SLORC three times. They shot at each other right in Khaw Taw. Lots of them were wounded and many died.

I was unhappy living there and I was afraid to live there. We left at night time, hiding then going, hiding then going further. I went with my family first, then another family followed us after we left Khaw Taw. If they captured us they would kill us right away, so we were hiding and then moving. I gave money to a person who can speak Burmese very well, and two of them guided us. I gave them 6,000 Ks. When we reached a checkpoint, the soldiers asked us, "Where are you going?" We said, "We're going to visit another place". The guide could take one of us through the checkpoint at one time. It took us three days on foot. We arrived at the bank of the Moei River. We are happy to be back in Thailand but we are afraid because the spies are looking for us. I am afraid to go into a refugee camp. The two guides are still here. They are afraid to go back, because after they came here the Burmese followed to look for them.

Interview: 25-HRV: Detention, Torture, Slavery, Livelihood, Execution, Religion, Refugee

Name : Pa Ngeh
 Age: 42
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with four children (age 3, 5, 10 years and 10 months)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Klaw Hta village, Papun District, Karen State
 Source: KHRG

Pa Ngeh's village was in a KNU-controlled area which had later been taken by SLORC. He is now a refugee in Thailand.

I brought my children here because of the Burmese troops. The Burmese troops captured me in February 1995. I am just a villager, people in my village are mostly farmers. The Burmese troops had to pass through our village on their way to Oo Po Hta. They took villagers with them on the way, then they took a different way back and they let the villagers go at 2:00 p.m. I went to look for a friend who had run away. On my way back after two or three days, the Burmese caught me on the way. They took off my shirt and found that I was wearing a military-colour T-shirt underneath. They asked, "Are you a soldier?" I said, "I'm not a soldier." They said, "How can you not be a soldier, when you are wearing military clothes? All of us are soldiers and we wear military clothes. If you are not a soldier, then you are an officer or NCO." After they asked two or three questions which I answered without thinking, a soldier started kicking me. Then another soldier kicked me and another came up and punched me two or three times. All the soldiers came up and beat me as much as they were pleased. Another one tied me up because they were worried that I would escape. Then another one came and touched me with a bayonet. He said, "Don't move. You see this bayonet." I thought they would shoot me, but they didn't. They asked me many questions. Then they said, "Stand up and move." I went together with them. When we arrived outside my village, one of them said, "Tell me all the secrets about your village." I said, "I don't know any secret". Then they told me to close my eyes. They kicked me on my chin and I fell unconscious. I didn't know anything for a while. After that, my arms and legs felt very weak. The soldiers told me, "Put on your sandals and we'll go back to the village." When we got there, they destroyed everything in the village. They came to catch porters. They burned houses and killed all the animals. After that they left and went on their way.

Because of kicking my chin and head were bleeding. The Burmese soldiers hit me like this, like that, like this and like that. They were all SLORC soldiers. There were 31 soldiers who caught and beat me, but there were about 400 others with them —

I'm not sure exactly how many. The commander saw his soldiers beating me and told them, "Don't beat him like that." If the commander didn't say that, I would have died for sure. Their commander who let me go was Bo Kyi Aung. Bo Kyi Aung was a Karen soldier, but not long ago he gave his weapon to SLORC and became a SLORC commander. When he did that twenty of his soldiers followed him. Now he has 400 SLORC soldiers under him [*SLORC soldiers and about 20 Karen defectors; it seems unlikely that SLORC would give such a command to a recent defector, so it may be in appearance only — so that SLORC can claim the entire battalion is DKBA*]. Bo Kyi Aung and his 20 friends wore soldiers' uniforms but a little different from SLORC soldiers. They went to the monks and got their yellow badges from them. On his other arm he wore the number "33" [*for SLORC LID 33*]. He and his friends wore yellow headband-scarves. All of Bo Kyi Aung's second lieutenants tried to organise the villagers to follow them. In the village, they didn't hurt the villagers but they took the people's rice and other things. If they found KNU soldiers, they took their guns if they didn't follow him. None of the villagers I knew follow them. Instead they'd all fled the village. If they captured Buddhists they let them go. If they captured Christians, they killed them. All Christians ran away when they heard he was coming. Bo Kyi Aung hated Christians very much, but I didn't know why. In the village, Bo Kyi Aung said that Karen women were all like rats, and that when the cats are at home, the rats can't stay at home. Some of the Buddhist families joined them, but some didn't join because they are afraid of the Burma Army. Most people say that the power is in SLORC's hands and they are leading the DKBA on a rope. Even the families who joined DKBA did it because they are afraid of SLORC. They organised villagers to join with gentle speeches, but if the villagers didn't want to join then they ordered them to join. If the people didn't join them, they threatened to burn their houses and take their things. So the families who didn't join them had to run away. Now there are troubles between the Christians and Buddhists because of the Burmese. They are spreading rumours and gossips to turn the people against each other. They put up notices on the trees, on the roadsides, at forks in the road and where people stop to take a rest — written orders from SLORC. They said, "If you see us, don't flee from us. Just stay at home." They said something against KNU, and that if villagers found out someone was co-operating with KNU, then that person would get into trouble. Families who join DKBA got assistance, but not enough. They only gave salt and rice, but not enough. They didn't give blankets or things like that.

Interview: 26-HRV: Livelihood, Torture, Execution, Slavery, Refugee, Displacement

Name : Pu Eh Phe Su
 Age: 53
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian

Family: Married with four children (age from 9 to 26 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Klaw Hta village, Papun District, Karen State
 Source: KHRG

Pu Eh Phe Su's village was in a KNU-controlled area which had later been taken by SLORC. He is now a refugee in Thailand.

They fired guns in our village and we couldn't stay anymore. At one time, they came, fired their guns and then left, so we could stay. But the last time, they shot a lot more and we couldn't stay. The first time was at the beginning of last month [February]. The second time was only two weeks later. The second time there were about 400 soldiers. I think they came to catch people, but they couldn't catch anyone. They used to fire their guns, arrest people and beat them if they couldn't answer questions. Two or three years ago [during their last major offensive into the area], they shot two people dead from our village. This time one person was killed at Klaw Hta. They shot him dead. He was a villager. He was over 70 years old, so he couldn't run. While the villagers were fleeing the village, he met them in the forest and they shot him. His name was Pu Hlu Poh. They shot him, hit his stomach and his intestines came out. Pa Kyaw saw it.

This time when they came to our village they fired their guns around. They didn't have time to say anything and we didn't have time to listen their voices, because we ran before they arrived. We hid on the other side of the village. A shell landed very close to my house. Nobody was hurt. They caught some porters, and these porters had to go and carry. None of our villagers joined DKBA. Everyone just fled the village. We couldn't carry anything when we ran, so we were in deep trouble along the way. I think we're safe here [in Thailand], but I'm not sure exactly.

Most of the people in our village were Buddhists, but there were many Christians too. There used to be so many houses, but by the time we fled there were only seven households left, four Buddhist families and three Christian families. Everybody ran away.

Interview: 27-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Repatriation, Disappearance

Name : Saw Klo Wah
 Age: 29
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Single
 Address: Papun township, Papun District, Karen State (Refugee in Ka Htee Hta camp for five years)

Source: KHRG

Saw Klo Wah was left behind in Ka Htee Hta by the camp leader to monitor events after most of the refugees left.

On 7 February 1995, SLORC and some DKBA soldiers arrived in Oo Thu Hta [*on the Burmese side of the Salween River, opposite Ka Htee Hta*]. At 4:45 p.m. on 10 February, some of them crossed to our Ka Htee Hta camp. Seventeen of them crossed by boats and three others came from the mountain [*these three must have crossed elsewhere to approach the camp from behind*]. Three of them were Karen, and the other 17 were Burmese. They were all wearing Burma Army uniforms and carried weapons. Three of them came up the hill to the Meh Wih Der section [*most of the refugees had already fled the camp, but about 50 families were still staying in this outlying section of the camp*]. They were Karen, and they had weapons. Two of them had G2 rifles [*Burma Army assault rifles*] and the other had an M16. All of them were wearing Burma Army uniforms, but I didn't see the number on their badges. They weren't far away, but as I was afraid and running, I didn't see the number. They asked, "Don't run away". But I was afraid and I continued running. After 15 minutes, many villagers from the refugee camp went to talk with them. More than 20 people went to talk, and they talked together peacefully. They told the villagers to come and follow them to Oo Thu Hta and Thu Mwe Hta, and said there wouldn't be any problem. I didn't go to meet with them, but I sent people to go and listen and then come back and tell me. On that day, 15 families followed them. They ordered those families to stay in Khaw Taw, in Ka Ma Maung area. They promised those families everything. They said that there would be no problem to stay there, and that no one would be allowed to stay here [Thailand]. They said that to stay here was very bad. They said, "Burmese leaders and soldiers have prepared a place for you on the Burmese side where everything is easy." SLORC was lying to them. Some people believed them while some people didn't understand. They didn't know about SLORC lies, so they followed them. They weren't afraid because the three soldiers were Karen. About 30 to 50 families didn't go with them. They left that evening to move to Meh Wih Kloh and Meh Paw Kloh [*further inside Thailand, where the other refugees had already moved for safety*]. It's five kilometres from Ka Htee Hta. Then Ka Htee Hta was empty. That first time they didn't point their guns at people, they just organised them together. But later, the second, third and fourth times were very bad. During those times they ordered people to follow them, and if some people did not follow then they pointed their guns at those who refused. That was after 10 February. After that the camp leader sent me here. Then I got information every day from the monk who was still staying at Meh Wih Der [*after 10 February, the monk and his helpers were the only ones who dared stay there. SLORC and DKBA used him to pass messages to the camp leaders, while he provided the camp leaders with information on SLORC and DKBA activities*].

Interview: 28-HRV: Refugee, Detention, Livelihood, Porters, Execution, Displacement, Women, Torture, Repatriation, Disappearance

Name : Saw Ghay Ploh
 Age: 45+
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married, several children
 Address: Ka Htee Hta refugee camp for about 10 years
 Source: KHRG

Saw Ghay Ploh was camp leader of Ka Htee Hta refugee camp. He was abducted and taken across the border with his family by SLORC/DKBA less than one week after this interview was conducted.

Between 6 and 10 February 1995, everyone left Ka Htee Hta camp to go to Meh Wih Kloh [*five kilometre inside Thailand*] because it wasn't safe anymore, except about 50 families in Section 1 [*Meh Wih Der section*]. On 7 February 1995, SLORC was shelling Oo Thu Hta [*across the Salween River from Ka Htee Hta*] the whole day. They first entered Oo Thu Hta at 4:00 p.m. On 8 February, SLORC went to Thaw Let Hta [*Mae Sam Lap, a Thai side trading village a few kilometres down-river*] by boat to get more diesel. On 9 February, the Thai Army left a boat with us because they couldn't get back to Thaw Let Hta [*the Thais were heading back down-river from further north, but had to go overland the last stretch because of the risk of SLORC attack on boats in the river*]. That day SLORC and DKBA stole that boat. We couldn't do anything to get it back. Then on 10 February, DKBA and SLORC entered section 1 of our camp. They were wearing army uniforms. They were from SLORC LIB 5. The four DKBA were Pa Pyaw, Pa Doh Deh, Swee Swee and Lway Say. I know all four of them, because they used to stay in the camp. They had uniforms with DKBA badges, a yellow Buddhist symbol with no number -- but their shirts are Burma Army shirts. Pa Doh Deh had a G2 [*Burma Army assault rifle*] and the others had M16's. They came to take the villagers back. Fifteen families went back. I think they went because they were afraid. Most families didn't go. Then from 10 to 12 February, the Burmese came into the camp and took all the villagers' belongings, livestock and rice from the storehouse. Three boat-loaded soldiers came across the river. They took 400 sacks [*100 kg. each*] from the storehouse, and 100 sacks that had already been distributed from the houses. [*When the refugees first evacuated the camp they planned to go back for these things, but once SLORC began crossing the river they didn't dare.*] They brought porters to carry these sacks. The porters were Karen and Burmese. They took them across to Oo Thu Hta. They had three big boats which were normally using for cattle trading. They took Bo Kyaw San's boat. It took them three days. The Burmese soldiers were carrying the sacks too.

The monks shouted at them not to take the rice, and they just shouted back. They also took 300 blankets from the storehouse that were to be distributed in the camp. The monks asked some people to go and carry some of the rice to us so we'd have something to eat [*these people went to take some rice out of the storehouse to carry it to the refugees at Meh Wih Klo. For some reason the Burmese didn't stop them doing this.*] On 12 February, they killed two of the Buddhist refugees who went back on 10 February. We knew because the monk and the people who carried the rice told us. The men they killed were Win Oo and Than Myint. Win Oo was 28 years old, married with three children. Than Myint was 20 years old and single — he was a Burmese student with ABSDF [All-Burma Students' Democratic Front]. I thought maybe they killed them because they wanted Win Oo's wife, but I didn't know. He hadn't done anything. They were from Ka Htee Hta, Section 5. Win Oo and Than Myint went across with the 15 families on 10 February. Then on 12 February, they were staying in Oo Thu Hta, and the Burmese killed them by the riverside. The monk went across to visit Oo Thu Hta to see if he could get any of our things back. He saw the bodies of Win Oo and Than Myint. They were shot to death, and their bodies were floating in the Salween River. On 12 February, they took five more families, so altogether they took 20 families, 113 people. Three DKBA came to Meh Wih Klo, five kilometres from the river. They came with guns to take people. This time they didn't ask, they said they would shoot the people if the people didn't come. They took five families with them. They said the Burmese would shell the place, so after they left everyone was afraid and cried and we ran away again. Everyone left that night and took their children with them because they were afraid of DKBA. Everyone went to Meh Paw Klo [*another hour's walk further into Thailand*]. We found out that on 15 February, the Burmese killed three of the men who DKBA took with them on 12 February. Their names were Meh Ka La, age 26, married with two children; Maw Bee, age 38, married with five children; and Pa Da Kee, age 32, married with two children. The monk heard the gunshots across the river, and then he found out from DKBA. On 18 February, the monk came to Meh Paw Klo from Meh Wih Der and talked to us. He said, "The Burmese told me that at the end of this month they will take the Meh Paw Klo area [*the new refugee camp, over five kilometre inside Thailand*]. They will shell this place and force you to go back to Burma." He said the Burmese came to his place at night with their weapons and gave an order for all of us to return by the end of the month or they would shell and attack us. I came and met the Thai Amphur [*government administrative district chief*] of Mae Sariang here at Mae Kong Kha and he said, "Don't run to here". I told him we needed to come here because we are afraid. So we just came here, and then the Amphur said it's okay. That's funny. Now we are here, but there are still 50 families to come from Meh Paw Klo. They will come here tomorrow. So far [*as of March 2*] the Burmese have not come to Meh Paw Klo. When the monk comes again we will get more news. Now he stays in Meh Wih Der. He is very charismatic, so he acts as a messenger both for us and the Burmese. Maung Than Myint also told me something. His niece Ma Nyay went with DKBA on 12 February. She is 18 years old. Maung Than Myint was staying at Thaw Let Hta [*Mae Sam Lap*], and he said on 21 February the DKBA brought his

niece across the river and told him what happened to her. DKBA said she had been raped by 20 Burmese soldiers, all on the same night. He said DKBA was very angry. They brought her across and asked the Thais to send her to Mae Sariang Hospital, but he says now she is hospitalised in Chiang Mai. I'm not sure.

Interview: 29-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Slavery, Displacement, Repatriation

Name : Saw Tha Htoo
 Age: 28
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single
 Address: Ka Htee Hta refugee camp
 Source: KHRG

On 10 and 11 February 1995, I was at Meh Wih Der. I had to take care of the rice in the storehouse, but the Burmese soldiers wouldn't listen to me. They took the rice, and they made me carry it also. They took the rice to the river. Then I started taking rice out of the storehouse so we could keep it. I took the rice to the monastery. The soldiers were all Burmese except one Karen from Yan Gyi Aung [*another witness gave his name as Maung Lay*]. He was in DKBA uniform. There were eight or nine Burmese with him at the storehouse, but there were many more Burmese waiting at the riverside. They were wearing uniforms. The Burmese at the storehouse weren't carrying weapons, they were carrying rice. But the ones by the riverside had guns to protect them. Five or six refugees had to help them. The others were afraid and ran away. While we were carrying, the Burmese asked us to go back to Burma. They said if we went back they wouldn't do anything to us, and they asked us to take them back across the river by boat. When they were searching the houses and got angry, they started bayoneting the floors. On 11 and 12 February, although we were few in number, they were many and they emptied the storehouse. They came with many people. There were about 20 Burmese, and six or seven of them came to the monastery with guns. Some DKBA came but stayed down at the riverside. On the 12 February, the monks told us not to go to the storehouse. Only a few people were still in Meh Wih Der — most were afraid to stay there anymore. After the 12 February, nobody stayed there anymore.

Interview: 30-HRV: Detention, Torture, Refugee, Displacement, Livelihood, Repatriation, Disappearance

Name : Saw Kaw Muh
 Age: 38

Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Address: Ber Lu Ko refugee camp
 Source: KHRG

When SLORC took the area south of Manerplaw, refugees from Kler Thay Lu and Mae Po Hta camps along the Moei river had to flee further inside Thailand. Most went to Baw Noh and other camps, but 200 or more fled to the Thai Karen village of Ber Lu Ko, where they set up an impromptu refugee camp. Saw Kyaw Li, or "Uncle Jolly", was staying there. He was formerly camp leader at Kler Thay Lu, but at Ber Lu Ko he was only in charge of transport and communication.

Uncle Kyaw Li was kidnapped on 2 March 1995. They came at about 7:30 p.m. Altogether there were 30 of them, and six came into the village to catch Kyaw Li. I saw six, then I ran from the house. They were Karen, wearing uniforms but without badges. They had guns, M16 and AK47. They came in two groups, one from the east to Uncle Kyaw Li's house and the other from the west, to Ko Lay's house. Uncle Kyaw Li was visiting his niece. He met DKBA here, in front of my house, after he left his niece's house. They caught him and beat him. They kicked him and beat him with a torch-light. Uncle Kyaw Li is 70 years old, maybe 80. He is not too unhealthy, but he has high blood pressure. I think they said to him, "We asked you to come back with us and you didn't come back. If you stay here you have a lot of power, so we've come to get you." Then they tied his hands and took him to Mae Tha Waw. They left at 10:00 p.m. All the other soldiers came from around the village and they went to the car road. We knew there were about 30 because we saw them sitting and smoking outside the village, and later we saw their footprints.

They left a letter in the village. It said, "Everyone must go back. You will get into trouble if you stay here." It said we all had to go back by 5 March, two days from then. I didn't see the letter — the camp leader got it, and he burned it. I don't think people will go. Buddhists won't go, and Christians won't go. They create problems for everyone. If they were just Buddhist soldiers we would go, but they have joined with the Burmese. If they come again we'll go to another place. There are 27 households of new refugees here.

Now Uncle Kyaw Li is being held at Meh Baw Plaw. His bodyguard went after him with his daughter, and the bodyguard came back and told us. He is not dead. I don't know if they will kill him. I don't know what DKBA's ideas are, joining with the Burmese. They are both the same. Kyaw Li is Christian SDA [*Seventh-Day Adventist, which is particularly hated by DKBA because it is Gen Bo Mya's religion*]. His wife already died. He has four children. At Kler Thay Lu, he was a camp leader. Now his daughter is with him. She is also a Christian.

We don't know about DKBA's relationship with Rangoon government or why

they've joined with the Burmese, but we know that they hate the Christians and if we go back we'll surely have trouble. If we thought the situation were safe and okay, we would go back.

Interview: 31-HRV: Refugee, Religion, Execution, Livelihood

Name : Naw Paw Nwee
 Age: 49
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married with six children (age between 13 and 27 years)
 Address: Hlaing Bwe township, Karen State (now a refugee in Thailand)
 Source: KHRG

Naw Paw Nwee's family lives just outside Gray Hta refugee camp in Thailand.

I have been living on the Thai side for 18 years. [*The other night, on 9 March*] we were at the hut in our field. They came at 1:30 a.m. We were sleeping. They pointed a gun at us and said, "Don't move". When they entered the hut there was a cross, a Bible and a hymn-book on the table, and they threw them away. Three men entered the hut, and the other three stayed outside. Only one man had a gun — the other two had no guns, they had knives. I don't know about the others outside. People told me the gun was an AK47 [*Thai soldiers told her the following day after finding the cartridge cases*]. Only one man wore an army uniform — the others wore black T-shirts and black pants, but the one with the gun wore shorts. They had cloth over their faces, with holes for the eyes. I think they were Karen. They spoke Karen and Burmese, each spoke a different language. They pointed their gun at all of us: myself, my husband and my son. They said, "Just don't move and keep your mouths shut". Then they asked for money. While one of the men was pointing the gun, the remaining two went to look around in the other rooms. When they came back, the one who had the gun went into the rooms and looked again. Those men took all the new clothes from our house. They took my two necklaces, my ring, one pair of earrings and 10,140 baht [*about US\$ 406, their life savings — note that poor people in Burma use jewellery as a form of savings, because banks are inaccessible and unreliable*]. My husband gave them the money and said, "We only have that money, I swear to God." Then the man said, "The situation is not like before. There is no God any longer." He said it in Karen. Then he shot my husband in the mouth and in the shoulder. He shot my son in the jaw, and again in the chest. The bullet came out through his back. He shot them two times each. After that they just left. After a few minutes I heard the sound of a car on the road.

My other son ran away when they entered the house. He was sleeping in the kitchen. He is only 12 years old. When he ran away he saw the men who were outside the

house. They had torch-lights. They were shining them on the house, and telling the others in Burmese not to fire their guns. My husband's name was Saw Htoo Htoo. He was 61 years old. My son was Tamla Htoo. He was 27. He had a wife and four children. The eldest is seven years old, the youngest is four months. Before, we planted tobacco, and my son sold the tobacco. That was all the money we had saved. My son was a good boy. He never asked for clothes. He never made any trouble for his parents. He was helping his father because our younger sons are still in school. [The family farmed tobacco and vegetables on the Burmese side of the river, but stayed in a hut on the Thai side of the river for safety. This is where the attack took place.]

Interview: 32-HRV: Refugee, Execution, Livelihood, women

Name : Pu Taw Ploh
 Age: 60
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Wife deceased, five children (age from 6 to 28 years) and a grandchildren
 Address: From Mae Let Hta Area, Papun District, Karen State; later a refugee in Mae Paw Mu Hta, Thailand (now a refugee in Thailand)
 Source: KHRG

Pu Taw Ploh's wife Naw Peh, age 60, was killed in the shooting on 20 February 1995.

We have been in Thailand for one year. We came through Mae Let Hta and stayed in Mae Paw Mu Hta, then to Kaw Mu Der, Meh Po and Htee Loh Tee Klo [after they had to flee Mae Paw Mu Hta because SLORC troops were across the river]. When we lived in our own place, nothing happened to us. Now when we moved to Thailand, the Burmese troops shot us. There were six families on the truck, five Christian and one Buddhist. Many brought their things with them. Our belongings were put in another truck which went earlier. I was at the back of the truck, but my family was in the middle, all our children were in the middle. I saw three men appeared, wearing military uniforms. They were around a curve in the road, on the bank alongside the road, on the driver's side. It was higher than the truck, so they could see us on the back. All of them had guns — one AK47, one Carbine and one mortar [M79 grenade launcher]. They said nothing. When they saw us, they stopped our truck and started shooting immediately. I saw the man on the hillside raising his hand to stop the truck, then the truck stopped, and when it stopped they came running down shooting. I couldn't do anything, just ran away. If we didn't run away, we would all be killed. They came running down, and they were shooting while they ran. I was the first to jump out. When I jumped out of the truck, I didn't care how I

fell, I wasn't afraid of being hurt by falling, I was just afraid of shooting. They were shooting dat dat dat dat dat, then automatic fire. My wife was afraid and tried to jump out of the truck. When she was about to jump, the bullet hit her. She was shot in the back. The bullet came out her front together with all her internal organs. Her name is Naw Peh. After we jumped down, they fired their M79. The glass of the windshield was smashed. It hit the front of the truck, and most people were hit by the shrapnel. Four of our children were hit. Of five in our family, four were wounded and my wife died. All of my children were wounded by splinters. One of my nieces, my wife and the driver were hit by bullets. My niece was hit right where she was as soon as the shooting started, she was the first one hit. The bullet hit her forehead, and split her head apart. The others were wounded by splinters. Each of them was seriously wounded. One was hit in the temple, my grandson Kya Ma Lay. As soon as we jumped down, we went down a steep bank into the gully. When the soldiers came down to the road we were already in the gully. We ran away any way we could, we went towards Kaw Thu Mwe village and slept there that night. I was carrying my grandson on my back. There is a medic there who can treat small wounds, but not big ones. Then they sent my grandson to Mu Yu [*Mae Sariang*] Hospital [*before sending him, foreign NGO staff who arrived had to do a transfusion and splenectomy in the field to save the little five-year-old boy's life, because he had also been hit badly in the abdomen*]. The others were not so serious. They stayed in other people's houses [*in Mae Ra Mu Klo camp*] and went to the clinic every day to get dressings.

An mahout was hurt too. When he saw the attack he jumped off his elephant and ran, and he was hit by a splinter in his back. Ours was the only truck that got shot. There were five trucks, we were the second and there were three more behind us. The people behind saw, and they stopped their trucks and ran away [*they went and notified the camp leader, who went to the scene together with Thai soldiers the following morning*]. I didn't go there in that morning.

I was aching all over. My son-in-law went to see at about 9:00 a.m. The men had searched my niece's bag, took her earrings and 80 baht [*Thai currency*] and tore up her bag. My wife also had money in her bag, but it was still there. She used her bag to cover her wound. She was laying face down and stuffed it against her wound. They [*the authorities*] took pictures of her, then her body was brought back and we buried her.

The men didn't shout anything, just raised their hand to stop the truck and shot. Their clothes were dark green, like usual, like SLORC uniforms. They looked like they could have been Burmese, but not for sure. Maybe DKBA, but they looked like SLORC because they were wearing SLORC uniforms. They didn't talk so I couldn't tell. Two of them had nothing on their heads, and the other had a cap. [*DKBA men often wear yellow headbands.*]

Interview: 33-HRV: Refugee, Child, Livelihood, Execution, women

Name : Naw Krit Heh
 Age: 27
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married, had a three-year-old child and in pregnant
 Address: From Mae Mweh Hta Area, Karen State; later a refugee in Mae Paw Mu Hta, Thailand
 Source: KHRG

I came to Thailand one year ago, first to Pway Baw Lu and then to section 4 of Mae Paw Mu Hta. We left Mae Paw Mu Hta, and last Thursday [20 February 1995] we were being moved here. We were on the truck with our belongings. I was with my husband and child, and also my parents. I was in the back, just behind the cab. I saw soldiers, Burmese. Three of them, with guns. They were in military uniforms. The colour was green, Burmese green. They were Burma Army uniforms, but I didn't see the badge. [*Note: the cut and colour of Burma Army uniforms are noticeably different from KNLA and other opposition uniforms.*] They looked like Burmese soldiers. They said "Stop", in Karen. Two of them were by the side the road and one was in front of us. The two by the side of the road stopped the truck. After we stopped, they started shooting at us. The one in front of the truck shot first. I couldn't count the shots. They shot constantly, and while they were shooting we tried to run away. They shot their mortar [*M79 grenade*] at the truck. When it exploded, I was hurt by a splinter and I jumped out and ran. My child was in my arms, and my husband ran in front of me. They kept shooting. I didn't follow my husband, I ran another direction. I ran down the slope and then crossed the field. My child was wounded just a little. When the mortar exploded, a splinter hit the glass windshield of the truck and a piece of glass hit him [*his name is Nay Hta Ghay, three years old*]. We ran to Tee Law Hta. Then the following day, people took us by car to the clinic [*at Mae Ra Mu Klo camp. Naw Krit Heh had a wound behind her left ear and three small superficial wounds on her back*]. My husband was also wounded. My mother Naw Peh died in the truck. We were sitting down together in the truck. When she stood up to run, the Burmese shot at her. When the mortar exploded, I looked for a second at my mother and then I ran away. May Paw was my sister-in-law. I saw when she was shot. She was shot in the head and she died on the spot. They were both shot by AK47 bullets. They shot us at Thay Wah Der, just a few minutes from our old camp [*Meh Po Kee*]. We left everything in the truck. I dared not go back to get them. People who went back saw my belongings and said they were all stained with blood.

Interview: 34-HRV: Refugee, Repatriation, Execution, Livelihood

Name : Saw Kwa
 Age: 49
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married with four children (age from 8 to 24 years)
 Address: From K'Thay Kee village, Karen State; later a refugee in Mae Paw Mu Hta, Thailand
 Source: KHRG

We used to cultivate paddy in the plains and on the hill-side. I'm also a carpenter. We came to Thailand three years ago, first to Thu Moei Hta camp [*forcibly repatriated by the Thai Army in mid-1992*], then to Mae Paw Mu Hta.

I was in the truck. I was in the cab, wedged between the driver and the conductor [both Thais]. There were three of us in the cab. I'm not sure how many people were in the back, maybe 13 or 14. Also some belongings, and six goats and two pigs. The people were from four families, but only some members of each family. I was the only one from my family, except my one sibling. The men blocked the way, stopped the truck and pointed their guns. I didn't hear whether they shouted or not. They just pointed their guns and then opened fire. We didn't hear anything, we didn't have time to listen. As soon as they pointed their guns we just ran. I didn't have a chance to look. But listening to the gunfire and looking later at the place, I think there were about 20 of them. I only saw one myself. He came out of the jungle, a small gully around a bend in the road. He was at the right side of the road, the driver's side. He stopped the car and then he shot the driver. Then the other guns followed. I saw him and then I couldn't see anymore, but I heard the sounds of six or seven guns. There was an uphill slope on the road, and they shot down the hill at us. When I was running, a bullet just grazed my back. I think the driver was hit instantly, but I didn't have time to look. He died. Then a grenade from M79 exploded and injured the children. It was 5:00 p.m. [on 20 February 1995] and we were between the hills, so I didn't see him very clearly. It looked like he had a soldier uniform. The others were up the slope. They fired at the car, and they fired at those who were running. As soon as I was out of the truck I went down the gully and followed the stream. The [Thai] conductor caught up with us, and the others came up one by one. Small children were running by themselves until others saw them and helped them. Eleven or twelve people were wounded by the M79 shrapnel. I had a bag on the truck, one or two machetes and a bag of rice. I was so scared and I never went back. Nobody asked about their belongings. The following morning people found them, and one of the small goats was playing with the child who had been left behind [*Naw May Paw's child, about four years old, who stayed alone beside his mother's body all night.*] These men were not robbers. The yellow headbands [*"Ko Per Baw", the common name people have adopted for the DKBA*] rebelled against the Christians,

and now they have joined the Burmese. The two groups have become one. We are refugees and we are in a KNU area, so they attacked us.

Interview: 35-HRV: Refugees, Livelihood

Name : Naw Shay Roh
 Age: 42
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Date: 20 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was standing in the back of the truck holding on to the side. I saw two men shooting, but I didn't see the man who stopped the car. I saw them standing and crouching and shooting their guns down. I had no time to look — when they shot, I ran. All five of my children were on the truck. My youngest is five years old. As soon as I jumped down, I heard an explosion. I grabbed my youngest child and ran. I fell down into the gully. I didn't even know I was wounded until I got to the stream and I saw the blood running down from my knee. The others were the same too.

Interview: 36-HRV: Refugees, Livelihood, Women, Child

Name : Naw Meh Ta Ker
 Age: 17
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Date: 20 February 1995
 Source: KHRG

When they started shooting, I was so afraid that I went like this [*she hid her head in her arms*] and I didn't see anything. I dared not look up. Then I looked. I didn't see the one who stopped the truck, but I saw the ones on the hillside. They were wearing army green, like Tatmadaw [*Burma Army*] uniforms. They shouted "Whay!" [*this could be either a Karen or Burmese shout*]. The young woman died near me, and the old woman too. Naw May Paw was laying like this by her bundle, and her child was sitting there. I was afraid, I saw people die, I saw Naw May Paw's brain coming out and I saw blood so I slid down out of the truck and ran. [*According to other witnesses the child, about four years old, was left behind and stayed by his dead mother all night long, until he was found along with the bodies the following morning.*]

Interview: 37-HRV: Slavery, Torture, Disappearance

Name : Mya Sein
 Age: 28
 Sex : Male
 Occupation: Trishaw driver
 Address: Moulmein Town, Mon State
 Interviewed: 18 March 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was taken on 7 March 1995. I was on the street with my trishaw. I was taken to an army base at Thein Zayat, near Thaton. I was then sent to Pa-an and then to Thingan Nyi Naung with other porters. I had to carry 75mm shells for IB 2 under the command of LID 44. I was kicked twice by a soldier when I was getting tried. One 60-year-old man asked for extra food, so the soldier hit him in the eye. His eye was bleeding. A 70-year-old man died because he had to work too much and the soldiers did not give him water. His body was left under a tree. When people die they are just crossed off the list of porters. The soldiers never tell the family that they died, instead they say they escaped. I fled on 14 March when there was fighting around Wah Lay. I was taken as a porter once before, three years ago, and taken to somewhere across from Mae Sot [*i.e. near Myawaddy*].

Interview: 38-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture

Name : Than Myint
 Age: 35
 Sex : Male
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Thanbyuzayat Town, Mon State
 Interviewed: 18 March 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was taken more than 20 days ago. The village headman called me and I was put on a truck by the IB 31. I was held for eight days in Thanbyuzayat and had to work building roads, breaking stones, and digging trenches. Then I was sent to the base of the LIB 104 near Moulmein. I was sent by boat with LIB 104 to Kyon Doe and then by car to Thingan Nyi Naung. We were then taken south to Palu Area. I carried goods for two days and then I got sick as we were walking through the jungle and the soldiers threw me under a tree. I got up continued walking slowly. Win Tin and Mya Sein saw me, helped me and gave me water. We escaped together. I still have pains in my chest.

Interview: 39-HRV: Slavery, Torture, Execution, Disappearance

Name : Hlaing Wai Oo
 Age: 20
 Sex : Male
 Occupation: Trishaw driver
 Address: Moulmein Town, Mon State
 Interviewed: 18 March 1995
 Source: KHRG

On 9 March, I was in a cinema hall watching a foreign movie together with about 70 other men. I was taken by boat to Kyon Doe, then one day later we were transported by truck to Thingan Nyi Naung, and then went with the other by truck to Palu Area. We were given very little to eat, just a small plastic bag with cooked rice, and it was very salty. I saw there men killed while we were moving with the army. One man was lying by the road, his head was bloody and he had been beaten to death. I saw another body, an old man, beside the road. We cannot stop and look at people who have been injured or have died, we have to keep walking and looking straight ahead when we see a body. The third man could no longer carry anything, so a soldier hit him on the chest and head. Then the soldier started hitting him on the shoulder with a 75mm shell. The porter said to the soldier, "Kill me, I can't go on anymore." Then the soldier just kicked him down the hill, so we don't know for sure if he died, but I think so. The soldiers told us that if we tried to run away we would be killed. I ran away on 14 March, during the fighting between Wah Lay and Kaneh Li.

Interview: 40-HRV: Slavery, Torture

Name : Naing Win Lwin
 Age: 26
 Sex : Male
 Occupation: Trishaw driver
 Address: Moulmein Town, Mon State
 Interviewed: 18 March 1995
 Source: KHRG

On 9 March, I was in the movie theatre with my family [*the same as Hlaing Wai Oo, interview 39*]. The soldiers from LIB 104 brought a truck up to the entrance of the theatre and they told all the men to stand on one side and the women to the other. Then the men were tied together and put on the truck. We were taken to the dock and put on a boat to Kyon Doe, then put on a truck and taken to Thingan Nyi Naung. On the truck to Thingan Nyi Naung, I was hit on the back of my head, my face, and my back when I lifted my head to look around. We were supposed to keep our heads bowed down. We were not given any water on the truck. If people asked for water they were beaten. Most of the people on the truck were beaten at least once. The

soldiers kept their guns pointed at us in case anybody tried to jump off the truck and run away. Many people were being taken as porters, even patients discharged from the hospital, although they were so weak to carry anything. Many porters ran away during the fighting a few days ago. Many have gone into Thailand. All of us want to go back to our homes as soon as we can.

Interview: 41-HRV: Disappearance

Name : Win Htun
 Age: 22
 Sex : Male
 Occupation: Firewood hawker
 Address: Pa-an Town, Karen State
 Interviewed: 18 March 1995
 Source: KHRG

In mid-February 1995, I was taken to be a porter. I was on my way to a coffee shop with my wife when I was taken. Many other people on the road were taken, especially a lot of bus drivers. Only men were taken. I was held in Pa-an for five days in the jail. I was taken by car from Pa-an to Thingan Nyi Naung where I was held for five days. When we were in Thingan Nyi Naung, we stayed in a monastery. We were then taken with the soldiers in convoy of 100 trucks from Thingan Nyi Naung and went somewhere near Palu. I was with 200 other porters and about 500-600 soldiers. I had to go with IB 2 of LID 44. I had to carry food and ammunition. I saw many people being beaten by the soldiers. One man was too tired to carry anything so a soldier kicked him down a hill. I don't know if he died or not. I escaped on 14 March during the fighting around Wah Lay.

Interview: 42-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture, Child

Name : Win Tin
 Age: 26
 Sex : Male
 Occupation: Truck mechanic/Conductor
 Address: Pa-an Town, Karen State
 Interviewed: 18 March 1995
 Source: KHRG

In mid-February 1995, I was taken to be a porter. I was taken by car from Pa-an to Thingan Nyi Naung, where I was held for five days along with other porters. Then I was taken by truck to Myawaddy and then to somewhere around Palu. I then had to carry food and 75mm shells for IB 2 under the command of LID 44 as they moved to attack the KNLA. I escaped on the 13 March while the soldiers were

moving through the jungle. I was only given food two times a day and it was not enough. I was not beaten but I saw many people beaten around me as we were moving through the jungle, about three or four people were beaten within a few hours. Some people were very old, about 60 and others were very young, between 13 and 16.

Interview: 43-HRV: Detention, Livelihood, Slavery, Women, Torture, Disappearance, Displacement

Name : Maung Ko Lay
 Age: 28
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with two children (one already died)
 Occupation: Seller at the market
 Address : South Okkalappa, Rangoon Division
 Interviewed: 7 March 1995
 Source: KHRG

I sell things in the market. Sometimes, I work as a bricklayer or dye clothes. I do whatever work I can get. They arrested me in the afternoon, about 1:30 p.m., when I went to watch video. That day my wife went to work, but there was no work for me. I went to look for work at the clothes dyeing place but they already had enough workers, so I had nothing to do in the afternoon. I went to watch a video called, "Hong Kong Jetma". It started at 1:30 p.m., and 15 minutes later soldiers closed the doors of the video hall and guarded every door. They surrounded the back, then they came in to the video hall and looked for men of my age. There were police together with soldiers. They picked up all the men of my age. They took about 25 or 30, I think — a lot of people. They left the elderly and women with children. They sent us to the railway station by truck. I saw a lot of people at the railway station, but I don't know where they were arrested. I think there were 150 or almost 200 people, all sitting on the ground. I didn't see any women or elderly. Later I saw some women in the jungle, but I don't know where the soldiers arrested them.

We slept at the railway station. Early in the morning we had to get up, and the soldiers kept us sitting there but didn't give us any food nor water. I wondered if they were waiting for their officer. I think it was 3:00 a.m., but I had no watch. Then the train arrived. They put us on the train and closed the doors, and no one who passed by could see inside the train. Inside, there was an iron grid cage. We had to stay inside the cage while the soldiers stood around outside of it. Then, the train left. At another railway station the soldiers made us get off, and I knew it was Thaton. Some trucks were waiting for us at the Thaton football ground. I saw a lot of people, about 300, and about 60 military trucks. Some people bribed the soldiers. I don't

know how they got the money or how much. I just saw them going back. The soldiers said, "Don't try to escape. You won't get free if you try to escape. If even one of you tries to escape, we've already received an order to kill you. Wait and see what will happen to you!" When they were talking to us, they looked as though they really would shoot us.

We were divided into many groups, five or seven or twelve in each group plus soldiers on each truck. There were five porters along with every four or five soldiers. At about 1:00 or 2:00 p.m., they sent us by truck to a village. We slept there one night. I didn't know where because I've never been that area before. We went to a camp. It was a big camp. I saw many battalions, a lot of warehouses and an airport. At night, we had to sleep beside the airport. Early in the following morning, they came and took us by truck. After ten minutes' drive, we got to the edge of the forest and we had to start carrying for LID 33 and LIB 216. I had to carry loads including beer, alcohol, Lucky Strike cigarettes and food. These loads were in a box 1½ feet high. The soldiers swore at me: "You won't see the rest of your life if you drop it! We'll kill you!" While they were walking, some soldiers often fired their guns to make noise. I was frightened, and looked back because I have a heart disease. Once, I almost dropped the box from my shoulders. A soldier saw me and kicked me in the back and the chest like a Kung Fu fighter, and he said rudely, "It is very important. It is not your mother's husband! [*a rude Burmese expression*]. If you do like that again, you'll see what will happen!"

I saw a man with us who was in bad health, and he died later. The night before he died, we reached a village, had a rest and then continued to another village. He couldn't carry anything so we helped him to carry his load. A soldier asked, "Why can't you follow us, even without your load?" He looked as if he couldn't follow them anymore. He said, "I really can't follow you, Sir. You can leave me or kill me." The soldier hit him in the forehead with his rifle butt, and his skin was broken and bleeding. He said, "Don't delay our journey!", and another soldier said, "Kill him! Don't waste time for only one." But other porters said they would help to carry the man — they said, "We have one man who is very strong." While we were saying this, the soldiers were pulling the man by his hands, dragging him cruelly. It was a horrible scene. A strong man came forward and told the soldiers that he would carry the man. The soldiers asked him, "Can you carry him?" and he said, "Yes". He took the man on his shoulders until we got to the big camp. Just before we got there, there was some fighting and two soldiers were killed. When we got to the camp they gave us some rice, just one canteen-lid full, put in some plastic or spooned into the longyi [*sarong*] of each porter. That night, we slept at the camp, located on the hill. The sick man couldn't eat anything, even when we gave him food. He couldn't move his mouth. We found him dead in his place the following morning and we covered him with a blanket. And we left, I don't know where he was from, but he was about 19 years old.

We had never climbed mountains like this before. We couldn't follow the soldiers

because we were very tired of climbing. One or two out of each group were left behind in some places, so the soldiers swore and drove them along to catch up. We saw about 150 women at the top of a hill. I've never seen so many women in the jungle before. They were Burma, Indian, Karen, various nationalities, may be Shan too. I saw them among the soldiers but I don't understand why. We stayed apart from them. I think the women didn't have to carry heavy loads, but I don't know how much they had to carry. At night before I went to sleep, I saw the sentry and asked him, "Where do we have to go, and when are we going to be released?" He seemed to be good-tempered. He said "The deeper the forest, the worse things are going to be. It would be a good idea for you to escape from here." But then he said, "Don't run away because the Karen soldiers will cut your head off when they see you, and there are many land mines." So we dared not escape. We had to keep following them into the deeper jungle.

Getting food and water was difficult. There were a lot of troops and all of them had water. I asked them for a bit of water but they refused it and said, "We don't have enough water to give you any." As for us, even though we had to carry their loads, we would have carried water as well if we'd had any containers. But we didn't. We had to throw away our own things, like our slippers and other things, because we couldn't carry anything extra. When we walked down hill with our slippers, sometimes we slipped and fell down, and then the soldiers hit us. That's why we threw our slippers away. The soldiers gave us rice once a day for two meals at a time, but we ate it all at once and couldn't keep any food for the next meal. It wasn't enough and we ate it all, so at night we had no food and no water. We were very hungry. When we were sick, we went to ask for some tablets but they said, "We have no medicine for you, only for us." I saw fighting only once. We just had to walk and walk, and carry their supplies.

One morning I was talking to the soldier I mentioned before, and he said, "You will get the worst later on." Then I saw a 50-year-old man who was left like the other man who died before. I didn't know if he is still alive. His name was U Tun San. The following morning, when we were carrying rice, we were looking for the opportunity to escape all the time. We were all waiting for the one who would escape first, but I didn't see anyone escaping. Then we saw a fork in the path, and one of the men in front of us started running down the hill. We followed him, throwing away our rice. There were eight of us, and we ran down the hill and were silent for about 1½ hours. While we were hiding, the soldiers were swearing at us and then they left. They didn't shoot any bullets because they didn't know where we were. We climbed any mountain we saw and we searched for food and water. We were losing our strength and becoming weak. We didn't have any food for the whole day, but our priority was water and to continue our journey mountain after mountain. Along the way, we met four Indians who said, "You are very lucky." They told us that as SLORC was advancing, we were following behind them. Then, we saw the river from the top of the highest mountain. Now we know it is the Salween River, but at the time we didn't know. We noticed that the SLORC troops had cooked and

eaten on top of that mountain. Some food was left over on the leaves, and I saw a lump of rice and I was so glad. I shared it with my comrades because we had escaped from hell together, although I could have eaten it all myself. We can really say that we were lucky. It took us three days to that mountain, then two more days to the river. We had to use flambeau to see our way at night. We passed through some villages, but we didn't see anyone in those villages. Everything inside the houses was in chaos and overturned. We slept in a village after the SLORC troops had left it. In that village, I could see that the SLORC troops had shot the pigs and chickens and taken whatever they saw. I had never seen this situation before.

We found some paddy in a village, so we husked it and cooked in a big tin that we found. We'd been three days without good until we found the paddy in the village. The following morning, we set out straight for the river. We imagined that once we got to the river, we'd build a raft to cross and escape from them. We couldn't think of anything else but escaping from them. When we reached the river, we saw Myo Thant [see his story in *Interview: 45*]. We first saw him from a distance, and we knew he wasn't a soldier because he was wearing a longyi [sarong]. We went towards him. He was moving a little bit, so we turned him over and found he was still alive. We gave him some boiled rice we'd saved from the village, and we carried him. We decided we would look for a village for help, and explain to the villagers our tragedy as porters. When we proceeded along the river, we saw a floating house in the river. We were surprised and happy because we thought we could use it to cross the river. But we were worried that someone would see it because it was so big, so we planned crossing. We cut some bamboo at 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. to carry with us, so that if the house broke apart we could use the bamboo. We carried Myo Thant and we put the bamboo in the house. Then we saw the students [*the All Burma Students' Democratic Front, calling from Thai side of the river*]. They shouted, "Who are you?" in Burmese. We thought they were Burmese soldiers because they spoke Burmese, so we didn't answer anything and we got ready to hide. Then they shouted again, "Are you porters?" with a different tone, so we came out and answered, "Yes, we are porters, and we are going to cross the river." They called, "Come quickly. You will die on that side." We tried to push the floating house but it was too heavy and it didn't work, so we crossed the river on small bamboo rafts. Each raft had five bamboo and two or three people could use it. There were 10 of us, four Muslims and six Burmans. On the other side of the river, the students gave us some rice and we made a fire freely and cooked it. They gave Myo Thant some medicine and noodles, and after that he got better. Then we came here. On the way, we could never make a fire because we were afraid the SLORC soldiers would see the smoke [*even though they were in Thailand*]. Now I still have this injury on my foot from tripping over something while I was carrying. I couldn't heal it, because I knew I would be given their [the SLORC soldiers] fists if I asked medicine for my foot.

Interview: 44-HRV: Force Relocation, Displacement, Livelihood, Detention, Slavery, Torture, Women, Disappearance

Name : Nyunt Swe
 Age: 23
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single
 Occupation: Clothing dryer
 Address : Dagon Satellite Town, Rangoon Division
 Interviewed: 7 March 1995
 Source: KHRG

Dagon and other "Satellite Towns" have been set up by SLORC as part of their forced relocation campaigns in urban areas. Some of these forced relocation aim to eliminate parts of cities which are traditional starting points for civil unrest, but more recent forced relocation have usually been to make way for modern foreign-owned hotels [90 of these are currently slated for Rangoon alone] and various tourism and other "development" projects.

I have lived in Dagon Satellite Town for about nine months. Before I stayed in Sin Ma Leit [a district in Rangoon], but the SLORC authorities relocated the people from Sin Ma Leit. The whole quarter had to move, about 300 households. Some people were sent to Hlaing Tha Yar Satellite Town and some to Dagon. At Dagon, they gave us a plot and we received 300 Ks [less than US\$ 3 at market rate], but we had to pay for the new house ourselves. There was no electricity and no water supply. We had to dig a well ourselves. It was very hard. Some people had to buy water. The ground used to be a paddy-field. There were a lot of people moving there from different places. It is very far from my work. I have to take a truck to Thingankyun for one hour, then to Rangoon downtown at Sule Pagoda, then another bus to work [in South Okkalappa]. In our old place at Sin Ma Leit, they built a plywood factory. It belongs to the government.

My father died. Now, there are five people in our family, my three younger siblings, my mother and I. My mother sells things. The younger ones are still very young, they are going to school. The situation is not good. We have to live day by day. I work one day, buy the food for one day and eat it all, then the following day I have to work again. Sometimes, we have to pawn our things to borrow money to buy food. And the price of rice is increasing. Today, maybe 60 Ks, the following day maybe 70 Ks. The more the government increases the pay of civil servants, the higher goes the price of rice. I earn about 50 or 60 Ks a day. Combined with my mother's earnings, we can buy food. Right now, the price of rice is between 60 and 70 Ks [per pyi, about equivalent to 2 kg.] Sometimes I have no work. The bus to

Thingankyun costs 2 Ks, but after 4:00 or 5:00 p.m., the government bus stops running and we can only take a private bus for 10-15 Ks. From downtown Rangoon to Dagon, it costs at least 30 to 40 Ks at night time.

The government provides rice for civil servants monthly at their work place, but I don't know how much they have to pay for it. Moreover, the civil servants can live in government houses. There are lots of civil servants in Dagon, in government houses with water and electricity. They sent all the people who are not civil servants to southern Dagon, and in northern Dagon there are only civil servants [*Note: from all other accounts, civil servants are also struggling to buy enough rice to survive. However, they are somewhat better off than Nyunt Swe, so by his standards they are rich.*]

In Dagon each plot is 20 ft by 60 ft. There is no public clinic, but we can go to a private clinic. There is one school, up to 9th Standard. The school is right in front of an army camp. It is LIB 303. Some of the school teachers are Captains' or Majors' wives. There are only a few civilian teachers. Some children go to that school, but most are sent to the monastery. The monks teach the children. We have to give them 25 Ks a month. We can send children to the government school but they have a strict quota. This year they didn't accept my younger sisters so we sent them to the monastery. The same for my neighbours' children. I cannot pay fees for high school. I myself had to leave school after 3rd Standard [*grade 3*]. Now my younger sister is in 3rd Standard. She is 10 years old.

I was arrested on the way back from work. An ordinary bus appeared in front of us and someone called us, "Get on! Get on!" We thought it might be a cheap fare bus and we got on. It took us to Thingankyun jail. There were about 15 of us — the others didn't get on the bus. They sent back the elderly and the children, and then there were 10 of us left in the jail including me. It was in January or February 1995, I think in February. I slept one night in the jail, then the following morning we were sent to the railway station. I saw about 80 people there. Some were sleeping and some were sitting on the floor. I was crying, bending my head down on my knees. They ordered, "Don't look up! Keep your heads down!" They put us inside iron cages inside two carriages of the train and took us to Thaton. Then they sent us to Thaton football ground. I saw a lot of porters there, 400 or 500, mostly men of my age. Some were between 30 and 40. There were no women. I saw about 80 army trucks, including 10 civilian trucks. After cooking, they ordered us to get into the trucks. Then they whistled for the convoy to get moving toward the jungle. The soldiers were talking to each other on radios. When they put us on the trucks I realised we would be porters.

I saw a lot of sentries along the way. We got to Pain Ne Gone village and slept there. They gave us some rice, one canteen lid of rice. A soldier said "Don't go anywhere! I'll shoot you if you go out!" Pain Ne Gone is in Papun Township. The following morning, we were sent to Papun by trucks, and when we got there they gathered us

U In a warehouse. Then three trucks sent us to the foot of a mountain. It took about one hour. From there the soldiers forced us to carry loads, like jerry-cans full of alcohol, dried fish, and cheroots. There were about 150 porters. At night, we had to carry the rice sacks. They were very heavy. We were forced to carry them to top of the hill by kicking and beatings. We had to come down from the hill at the same night. They stopped and put us in one place on the ground and then they said "You can have dinner now!" But we had no food, because we only got two canteen lids of rice per day without any curry, fish paste or salt and it wasn't enough [*so they'd already eaten it all for the day*]. We asked the soldiers, "Are we near our destination?" He said, "No. There's been some fighting in front of us." Later we saw an overturned military truck, two dead bodies covered in blankets and blood all around. When we were walking we saw many trucks coming back. I asked a soldier and he said, "There was fighting with the convoy we saw."

D At Pa Hai camp I saw a lot of soldiers and about 100 women. They were Indian women and some Karen women. Some women were from the cities. The following morning, the soldiers were swearing at the women because they couldn't carry, but the women kept smiling. But it wasn't easy for us. At night, the soldiers gave us the rice sacks to carry the following day. Every morning we had to carry the rice sacks [*from Pa Hai camp up the mountain*] and the soldiers said, "Don't run away. You will be beheaded by Karen soldiers". We couldn't bear this any longer. We were put between groups of soldiers when we were walking. They were from IB 4 under the command of LID 33. They had many officers. At 7:00 a.m., we started to carry. We had a rest at 1:00 p.m. and we received one canteen lid of rice and continued. We weren't allowed to drink water after we ate [*usually in Burma people don't drink anything with a meal, but drink a glass of water as soon as they finish*]. After five or six hours we had a rest. I was carrying for about six days. We had to carry all day from place to place, and even at night time. They threatened us, "There are lots of land mines around. Don't run away!" Sometimes soldiers were very drunk, and they talked to us stupidly so we couldn't sleep well. Then the soldiers said, "We'll kill you when you pass in front of us." The soldiers chose a leader from among the porters for each group of 50 porters. Sometimes, that leader punched us too. He just had to carry one soldier's bag on his back, and he got more food than us. He got two canteen lids of rice when we got only one.

H I saw one porter beaten with a rifle butt, but I didn't remember his name. Afterwards, the soldiers were talking to each other and said, "It will be better to abandon him here." Another one said, "We could get into trouble if we leave him here, so it would be better to kill him now." But they didn't kill him, and we carried him to Pa Hai camp. In the morning, I think he had died because he didn't move any more. When we left the camp, they left him lying on the ground covered with rice sacks. After we left the camp we escaped. Eight of us escaped, but along the way we saw one porter on the riverbank and another at the students' place. At night on 19 [February], we built a raft 7 ft long. We saw something moving across the river and we stayed quiet on the raft. We thought it might be SLORC soldiers. They asked,

"Who are you?" from the Thai side, the first in Burmese and the second in Burmese but with a Karen accent. So we answered, "We are porters". We went to them, and we saw one dead body in the river near the Thai side. They asked us, "Did you put the dead body here?", and we said we didn't [*the body was most likely a porter killed by SLORC troops further up the river — such bodies are a common sight in the Salween*]. They said, "We have rice for you". That night, we got two pots of rice. We ate it and slept. The following morning they said, "The situation is not good here", and Kyaw Kyaw sent us to this place by car.

I saw DKBA, but they weren't with our group. Kyaw Kyaw told me about them. We saw them wearing yellow headbands and shouting at the Burmese side [*of the Salween River*] from the Thai side. They were shouting at the boats in the river to come to them. They shot two or three bullets, then they burned down one house and went back uphill. The following morning, they came back to the riverside wearing red scarves around their necks. We were hiding in a house on the Thai side. They drove upriver in a boat, arrested one man and asked for a ransom of about 10,000 baht. There were about 20 of them in two boats.

Interview: 45-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture, Disappearance

Name : Myo Thant
 Age: 29
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with three children
 Occupation: Seller at the market
 Address : Taukkyan, Rangoon Division
 Interviewed: 7 March 1995
 Source: KHRG

They arrested me at Taukkyan market, at about 6:00 p.m. They sent us right away on an army truck to Rangoon railway station. We slept one night there, then the following morning we left for Thaton. They made us sleep one night at Thaton football ground, with no roof or anything. There were 400-600 of us, only men. They gave us just rice and fish paste, each an equal amount of rice. I think they said, "Tomorrow, you have to go as porters". They never offered to pay us. I don't think we could have bribed them. Some men were sick.

The following day, they took us to Papun in an army truck. Finally we reached the end of the road. We couldn't go any further, and we had to start walking. They forced us to carry shells. We had to go to the top of the mountain. I had to carry six shells, longer than one plah [*about 18 inches*] each. There were 200 people just carrying their heavy weapons. There were elderly men between 50 and 60 years.

Sometimes I had to carry three big tins of rice. We started early in the morning. We got to eat between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m., but it depended on the situation. They gave us some food, then we had to continue until 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. and then we could take dinner. At about 12:00 noon or 1:00 p.m. they fed us one canteen-lid of rice with fish paste. If there was no fish paste we got a bit of salt. We couldn't ask the soldiers for water. When we were walking and we saw a stream we could drink some water, but we had no container. Everything depended on the situation. Sometimes we could rest, sometimes we couldn't. When they lost their way, we could rest while they were looking for the way.

When they were shooting heavily, I laid down on the ground and hid behind the paddy-field dike. I was struggling for my life. I didn't see anybody who they were fighting, because I had to stay on their side. I only heard about the fighting at Manerplaw. I met the DKBA. They were guides for SLORC, to show them the way through the jungle. There were about 30 of them, carrying guns. They tied yellow pieces of monks' clothing around their heads. I saw them talking to SLORC on walkie-talkies.

The Burmese soldiers' badges said 3 on one side [*probably 33, for LID 33*] and 116 on the other [*for LIB 116*]. We had to walk in procession — one group of porters behind each group of soldiers. There were 10 porters in one group, then five or six soldiers. When a porter was too weak and was staggering, the soldiers lost their patience and kicked them down the hillside. I saw this about six times. I saw it with my own eyes. When the soldiers had finished attacking Manerplaw, I had no more energy and I didn't get any food. On the way to their camp, I couldn't walk anymore. I told the soldiers that I couldn't follow them anymore, but the soldiers thought I was lying. They swore at me and hit me with rifle butts. They hit my knees three times, and my back and chest several times. Then they left me alone in the forest. I stayed in that place in the jungle for about one week without food. Then I felt very hot and thirsty so I went to look for water. I found water and took a bath and a drink. I was very weak so I couldn't sit up at all. I didn't have any food for one week. I wanted to go back to a hut but I fell down on the sand. Then I fell asleep, and some other porters found me and carried me. [*Other porters said they found him unconscious along the riverbank — see interviews 43-44, 46.*] I couldn't walk, so they had to carry me all the way to the students [*the ABSDF*]. We crossed the Salween River. Now I still have scars [*he showed scars on his chest, back and legs*]. I want to go home. I don't know how to survive here at all.

Interview: 46-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture, Women, Child

Name : Khin Myint
 Age: 25
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman

Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with one child (age 19 months)
 Occupation: Hawker/Day labourer
 Address : Henzada, Irrawaddy Division
 Interviewed: 7 March 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was arrested at 8:00 p.m. on 10 February. I was watching a video in another quarter of the town. The army arrested 17 of us. They didn't say anything to us. They just took us to LIB 17 on the other side of the river. Then they took us across the river to Tharawaw, and then to Rangoon. We stayed one night in Rangoon but didn't sleep. They sent us by train from Rangoon to Thaton football ground. We arrived at about 11:00 a.m. There were 80 trucks there and they put about 12 porters and four or five soldiers in each truck. They sent us to Papun. We slept two nights on the way to Papun. We started walking from Papun. I had to carry salt, canned meat, dried fish, alcohol and other supplies. The dried fish bags were light but the salt was very heavy. The other bags were even heavier, but I don't know what was inside. We had to carry those between two of us.

They gave us one canteen lid of rice and salt. If they were in a good mood, sometimes they gave us dried fish and some oil. When they didn't give us any food, they said they would give us curry the following day. We started walking at 5:00 a.m. and we reached the military post called Pa Hai camp at 5:00 p.m. Some porters couldn't carry on the way and they were beaten with rifle butts. One of them, Hla Tin, pleaded, "Just leave me. I can't carry anymore." But they didn't leave anyone, they just dragged him. I didn't see them killing anyone, because I was in the front group. Before we reached Pa Hai camp, each soldier had ten porters. After Pa Hai camp they didn't follow us like that. They only had five or ten soldiers leading the way. Altogether there were about 80 soldiers. There was a man who was not a soldier. The soldiers told him to be a leader for 50 porters. He had nothing to carry. He beat and kicked all the porters who couldn't carry, who refused to carry or who tried to rest. The soldiers kicked the porters who were close to them. There were about 500 porters altogether. The youngest were about 18 years old, and the eldest were about 50 or 60. Our group had 100 or 150 porters. Over 10 soldiers went in front of us, and about 100 women porters were behind. Then some more soldiers were behind the women. They usually kicked us two or three times on the back. While they were beating us, we tried to avoid it and just go faster. One of those times, a porter who was wearing yellow shorts dropped his load and tried to escape. I also dropped mine and tried to follow him to escape. I only carried for two days. We also had to carry water sometimes. We had to walk very far to get it. We couldn't sleep very well because as soon as we got back to their camp they always forced some porters to go and get water. They also forced 50 of us to go to a place where their truck went off the road and pull it back onto the road. So we only had a short time to sleep.

The women had to carry the same as we did, but their load was not as heavy as ours.

When the porters were getting ready to leave Pa Hai camp, I saw them yelling at an old woman who was laying down: "Wake up and start carrying!" But she didn't get up. She and the other women were about 60 or 70 years old, and the soldiers yelled and shouted at them. Some of them were Karen, some Indian and some Burmese, but all of them could speak Burmese. Among the elderly women, I saw a child aged about 14. He was staying with the women. I think they were sick. We also saw five or six women who had fair complexion and didn't look like porters. They looked at us smiling and laughing. I'm sure that they were not porters. After escaping we passed some villages. We slept three nights on the way, and we had no food to eat for three days. There were eight of us. We saw houses but there was nobody in them. We reached the highest mountain and saw that the soldiers had just left there, and then we saw a small stream and continued. We saw a small village, but no one was there. I went in a house and saw empty boxes and things spread all over, and we found some paddy. We cooked it and slept there one night. The following morning we left. We saw a big stream and found a field hut, and we slept there one night. We found some more paddy, we pounded it and cooked it and then we continued. We saw a village — there were many houses, even some big houses, but there was nobody there. We found a man lying on the riverbank [Myo Thant]. We gave him some boiled rice and some banana and asked him about the SLORC troops and he said, "They left in that direction. They left me on the way 10 days ago. I had no water, so I came to the river to get water and I couldn't make it back." We planned to make a bamboo raft, but then we saw a floating house. We put our rice soup pot on it and tried to cross the river, but we were drifting. After a few minutes, a group shouted at us, "Who are you? Where are you going?" We jumped into the river and went to them. They were students. We reached them on 19 [February]. It was five days after we escaped. Now we don't know which direction to go or how far it is, but we will try to go home.

Interview: 47-HRV: Livelihood, Detention, Refugees, Repatriation, Disappearance

Name : Saw Kaw Ghay
 Age: 21
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Single
 Address : Mae Ra Mu Klo (Mae Ra Ma Luang) Refugee Camp
 Interviewed: 27 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

[Saw Kaw Ghay shared a house in Section 1 with two foreign teachers who were away at the time of the attack. The house is right at the end of the camp, the first house the DKBA encountered.]

The DKBA came the day before yesterday, at 12:00 noon on 25 April. I was in the house ready to take a bath. One of my friends said “ko per baw, ko per baw!”, and they were outside the house. I looked for a way to escape. They said, “Don’t escape. If you escape, we are going to kill you.” They didn’t trust people in our house, they thought maybe we were soldiers. I went and stayed next to a big tree there. There were more than 35 of them. Some were wearing uniforms. They had AK47, AR [*a smaller version of M16*], and some had hand grenades — I think maybe they were the leaders, controlling the group. They almost all looked Karen, but some looked a bit different. Different face — maybe Burmese, or maybe just villagers. Some spoke Karen, but some never spoke a word. They only pointed their guns and didn’t say anything.

Two of them pointed their guns at me — one was very young, and one was an elderly. Most of them were elderly. They didn’t look much like soldiers, but they had badges on their arms, and scarves that said DKBA’. Their badges were yellow and said DKBA’, and they also had necklaces with a monk amulet. They went inside the house, took the suitcase and bags and everything and carried them outside. They didn’t know how to open the suitcase, so they called me and said, “Give us the key to open this.” I told them, “This box has no key”, then they were going to shoot it open so I said, “No, no, wait a minute” and I got the key. They pointed their guns: “Okay, open it.” When it was open, they took my cassette player, clothes and some belongings. It was my suitcase. Also, one of the boxes that was belonged to the foreign teachers, and many bags. They took those teachers’ belongings too. They said if they find any foreigners they will take them to Khaw Taw [*Myaing Gyi Ngu, DKBA headquarters*]. I don’t know why. Their faces were a bit red. They seemed like people who have drunk alcohol. They acted a little bit drunk — very brave, and pushy toward people. All of them. I heard one of the villagers said that before they came down to the camp they took some tablets, all of them. The villagers up there saw them, in the village upstream from Section 1 — not far. One of the villagers said they took it when they arrested him. Then they came down to the camp.

Then they left two soldiers to guard me. They said, “Sit next to the big tree there.” They said, “Are you a soldier or a student?” I said “I was a student”. “From where?” “From Pway Baw Lu.” “Most of the Pway Baw Lu students are soldiers”, he said. I said, “Aw — no, no.” I thought if they know we are soldier-students they would kill me and some other people [*the Pway Baw Lu students and others used to help in supporting roles such as carrying rice, village sentries and occasional soldiering, during major SLORC offensives in the area*]. I saw the other soldiers going inside the people’s houses, taking cassette players and other things they needed. They told people, “If you need some important things in your house, take them now because we are going to burn it.” The people went down out of their houses and ran up into the hills. They started to burn the houses when they were coming back from Section 2. They shot AK47’s. They fired a kind of bullet [*tracer rounds*] that make fire. When they shot the gun and it touched something, everything was burned. The houses were very close. It was easy to burn them. The camp security guards couldn’t

shoot because the DKBA had villagers all around them. They were taking people just to cover them, women and children, and some of the women were pregnant. When they started to burn the houses, some of the camp security guards on the mountain shot their guns into the air, and Em Marta [a senior KNU health ministry official] rushed into a toilet and hid and escaped. Some of the Yellow Headbands were running, some were shooting at the houses and some were shooting at the people or the security guards. They came back [to Section 1] step by step. One group withdrew while one group covered them, and so on step by step like that. When we saw that we knew they'd had training. And all the time they were shooting the fire-bullets. One woman with a baby was wounded by a bullet here, in the shoulder. I didn't see the other wounded.

Then they went to the refugees and said, "Now we're going to send you to Khaw Taw." They said, "Why do you want to stay here? It's no good. In Khaw Taw, we have a big place, and rice and fish paste and oh, it's full of many things. And here, nothing!" Nobody believed them, but they were afraid so they just said, "Yes. I see. Mm-hmm" Like that. They took many people, I don't know how many — with all the children and grandfathers, maybe more than 100. They tried to tie up some of the important persons. They wanted to tie us all up, but they didn't have enough rope. The villagers had to go with them just for cover, so that the security guards couldn't shoot the DKBA, so they told the villagers, "Go, go, go, go, go! We're going to take you to Khaw Taw. If you go to Khaw Taw you'll have special food. Here you don't have anything." At that time, I was a little afraid and couldn't say anything. I was very sad to look at the people. For some people, it was very hard to carry their very heavy loads [which they'd saved from their houses]. I tried to help them carry. Some people lied and said, "I have a stomach ache" or "I have a headache", they gave many reasons to the DKBA soldiers, and then they went slowly and the DKBA couldn't wait for them. They were going back very quickly. They had DKBA, then villagers, then DKBA, then villagers, to cover them. I went with them not far away, maybe only 10 minutes. After we passed the village, we crossed a stream and I said, "Oh, please give me permission to go help my father". He said, "Where is your father?" I pointed to one of the grandfathers there who couldn't walk, and he said, "Okay, okay. Follow me later." Then that guy couldn't wait for me, and I ran down and hid by the stream until they were gone. All the people were trying to escape when the DKBA couldn't see. They all escaped sooner or later. Many people came back to the camp. Some people escaped into the hills and hid in the forest, and maybe they'll come back in a few days. DKBA said, "If someone doesn't want to go now, we'll come back and take them in a few days." Maybe they'll come. We don't know.

Interview: 48-HRV: Detention, Refugee, Livelihood, Slavery, Repatriation Disappearance

Name : Saw Lah Mu
Age: 36

Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married with four children
 Address : Formerly at Mae Paw Mu Hta and now at Mae Ra Mu Klo (Mae Ra Ma Luang) Refugee Camp
 Interviewed: 27 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

The Yellow Headbands came the day before yesterday, on 25 April. They arrived about 12:30 p.m. I was in a paddy field looking for some wild vegetables. They met me in the paddy field and took me with them. They were going to tie me and I said, "No need to tie me", but they said, "We have to tie you, otherwise you'll run to the camp and tell the others that we're coming". I said, "How can I escape from you? We're in an open field." They tied one of my hands and took me back to the camp. My fishing basket was full of vegetables and I left it in a house. When they caught me I was alone, but they'd already caught three or four villagers before me at a place called Tee Ler Baw.

They asked me, "Are there any soldiers doing security for the camp?" I answered, "No, there are no sentries." The Yellow Headbands said, "Answer our questions truthfully. You must realise that your life is in our hands." I said, "Yes, I am speaking the truth. When I left the camp, there were no soldiers guarding it, but I don't know about now. Maybe if they heard you are coming there are soldiers there now." Then they took me along with them to the camp. Four or five soldiers were walking ahead of me. With me, there were another two villagers, the sons of Bo Hla Taing. They were caught when they went fishing. There were 30 or 40 Yellow Headbands. They all looked like Karens. I knew most of them. They used to stay at Thee Tha Hta sawmill [*just across the river from Mae Paw Mu Hta refugee camp*]. The leader of the group was Maung Shwe Lone. He used to be a villager before, a monastery elder, not a soldier. There were also two villagers with them from Kan Nya Naung and a [*Buddhist*] hermit. This hermit used to stay in a place called Ta Kho Law Kyo, then he got married and joined DKBA. They were wearing uniforms. They looked happy. They didn't look afraid.

When we arrived at the camp, they all went rushing into the camp and fired their weapons. They had AK47, M16, also G3 and G4 automatic rifles and M79 grenade launchers [*AK47 and M16 assault rifles and M79 grenade launchers are used by Karen troops, but G3 and G4 are strictly Burma Army weapons*]. They fired mostly in the air. The Yellow Headbands said that when they were coming to the refugee camp they met Thai soldiers who shot at them [*this never happened*], and that's why they had to shoot a lot. They said they wouldn't harm or shoot the villagers. At the camp, they tied me to a tree and left there. I couldn't move and I didn't see any Thai soldiers. Then they started looting and burning the houses in the camp. They ran here and there in the village. It lasted about 30 minutes, and then they left. They

took me along with them. They made me carry three or four cassette players [*which they'd looted*]. They took about 200 people with them, young and elderly, as far as Tee Ler Baw. The women and children were all carrying their own belongings, and some people were also made carrying the things the Yellow Headbands had looted. Everyone carried their belongings except me — I had nothing. Later I looked for my small basket of vegetables, but I couldn't find it anymore.

The Yellow Headbands didn't beat anyone, but when people complained that their belongings were heavy and when they wanted to rest, the soldiers forced them to keep going. They wouldn't let them rest. The villagers were in the middle — some soldiers were walking ahead of them, and others were behind. But there were also soldiers in the middle, so they could watch that nobody tried to escape. Near Tee Ler Baw, some shooting started and everyone started running here and there. They shot just one magazine each, then the fighting was over. No Yellow Headbands were hurt. Everybody escaped at the fighting spot except Deh Mu, Johnny and I, because we were tied up. I have no idea why those two were tied up — maybe the soldiers were afraid they were trying to escape. I told the soldiers that my wife and small children were left behind. I said, "My children are small and my wife is not well. Please let me go home". They said, "That's okay", and they let me go.

They said they would take Deh Mu to Khaw Taw [*Myaing Gyi Ngu, DKBA headquarters*] to the monks. They said they will give him magic medicine to drink, and after that the monks will send him back to take all his family with him down to Khaw Taw. If you drink this medicine, you have to obey whatever they order you to do. And if you don't obey and do things against the monks, then bad things will happen to you. They crossed the river [*back into Burma*] near Thu Mwe Hta [*the junction of the Moei and Salween Rivers*]. I saw them take Deh Mu with my own eyes. It was near a Thai outpost — surely the Thais saw them crossing the river.

The group I was with, they were all Karens. I have known them. But there were other groups which I didn't know. According to what the soldiers said, there were surely some Burmese. They did this operation by the help of SLORC. They said, "This time we come to burn the village without the Burmese. But next time, they'll come along with us and it will be worse than this time." I think the Burmese will come along, destroy the village, harass the people and try to catch important KNU leaders. When they catch the leaders, I don't know what they will do. When the Yellow Headbands arrived at the camp they asked, "Are there any foreigners here?" I said, "There are", and they said, "We're going to arrest the foreigners." I said, "Don't do that. Have pity on the foreigners. It will be very hard for them." They said they would take the foreigners down to Khaw Taw. What they will do with them there, I don't know! My house was not destroyed — I live in Section 5. They said they will come back and completely destroy the whole camp. I'm afraid to stay here, but I can't go anywhere else. I don't know the way, and I don't speak Thai. I can only stay here, even though I am afraid. If all the others move, I will follow them.

Interview: 49-HRV: Women, Refugee, Livelihood, Repatriation

Name : Naw Eh Htoo
 Age: 36
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with one baby (age three months)
 Address : Mae Ra Mu Klo (Mae Ra Ma Luang) Refugee Camp
 Interviewed: 27 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

[Naw Eh Htoo was hit in the back of her left shoulder by a bullet, which left a half-inch hole and exited through the front of her shoulder.]

I lived in Section 1. My house was located only two or three houses from the Thai police station [*army post*]. The day before yesterday, the Yellow Headbands came and I tried to run away. They were shooting, and I was hurt. When they came, my husband and I were giving the baby a bath. I told my husband to run. My baby was naked, and I wrapped him in a piece of sarong and started running. I was hit just a few steps from my house. I had to carry my baby in only one arm [*because of her wound*]. I tried to run, run, and run until I reached the foot of a big rock, and the wound became worse and worse. I was bleeding a lot — even my baby was stained with my blood. I rested near the big rock. My wound was bleeding and painful. I tried to stop the bleeding by tying the cloth from my baby around my shoulder. It was very painful. I could only use one arm. While I was resting, I saw them go up to the place where the Thai troops stayed, and they cleared the place. Then they came down from the hill and saw me and told me, “Don’t be afraid. Come with us.” I was afraid, so I went along with them. I went and stayed under my house. Then they started blowing a whistle, and they rushed and fired into the village and after that they started burning down the houses. They burned the houses with [*cigarette*] lighters, by lighting the roof [*the roofs are made of leaves*]. When they burned the houses I was under my house. I saw them start fires on other houses, and then the fire spread to my house. I started running to escape from the fire. They were also leaving the camp. They told me to go upstream with them, but I told them I couldn’t because I was wounded. I sat down on the bank of the stream and rested there. They didn’t do anything to me. They just left me behind.

My wound still hurts now. The bullet penetrated from the back and came out to the front. At the back you can put your little finger in the wound, and in the front you can put your thumb in. The bone is okay though. The medic put some medicine and a dressing on it and wrapped it in a bandage. It hurts when I move my arm up and down.

I am afraid to stay here. I feel there is no safety anywhere in this area. There is

nothing bad between me and the Yellow Headbands, but I'm afraid that when they come to the camp and people run here and there a bullet could hit me. But they will never torture me. When they set fire to the other houses I told them, "I will go into my house to get some things". They didn't say anything so I went into my house, but I could only get a few belongings. The rest burned along with my house. I saved as much as I could — only two cooking pots, three plates and some blankets. Now I have nothing. I have no money to buy clothing, and I can't sleep twice in the same place. I move every night from one place to another [*she is still staying close to Section 2 and is afraid of further attacks*]. I just have to stay like this.

Interview: 50-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood

Name : Saw Wah
 Age: 32
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Family: Married with four children (age 8, 5, 2 years and 2-month-old baby)
 Address : Mae Ra Mu Klo (Mae Ra Ma Luang) Refugee Camp
 Interviewed: 27 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

[Both Saw Wah and his wife Htoo Htoo (see below) were wounded by shrapnel in the attack. He was hit in the upper leg and could only walk with great difficulty when interviewed, while she had a very small wound in the heel.]

We live in Section 2. The day before yesterday I was in my house by the school [*in the part of section 2 which wasn't burned*]. I didn't see anything, I just heard shooting. I was cooking rice at the time. When they shot, they hit me, and then I started running. I was hit in my leg, from a big gun. The shell exploded right at my house. I don't know how many shells, I just ran away as soon as I heard shooting. After that they arrived at our house. They burned the house. They didn't see me because I had run away. I went to the clinic, but I saw nobody there so I kept going. I never saw the Yellow Headbands.

Now my wound is very painful. My house was burned down and I have nothing left. Now I am going to live in Section 3. If they come back again, I can't run anywhere because I can't even run. My wife was also wounded. I don't know what to think about the Yellow Headbands. I can't do anything about it.

[His wife, Htoo Htoo, age 30, added the following:]

I was staying in my house with my husband. I was taking care of my baby. I heard the sound, gunshots. I ran. When the explosion came I was still in the house. As soon as I got hit, I started running. Now I can walk, but it is a little bit painful. If they come back we will run, even if we cannot run we will run.

Interview: 51-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Repatriation, Execution, Women, Detention, Religion

Name : Ma Htway
 Age: 20
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen Muslim
 Religion Islam
 Family: Single
 Address : Baw Noh (Mae Tha Waw) Refugee Camp
 Interviewed: 29 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

Yesterday the Yellow Headbands arrived at 8:30 or 9:00 a.m. They came and fired their guns. When we heard the shooting, we ran and hid under the houses. We didn't know where they were coming from, so we couldn't run outside the camp [*mortar shells were being fired into the back half of the camp while DKBA entered from the front, so to the refugees it probably sounded like they were coming from all directions at once*]. We couldn't run anywhere. When they started shooting, we tried to run anyway. After they entered the camp we couldn't go back to get our belongings, so they burnt our houses and our belongings too. We just ran for our lives without anything. My sister and I, we didn't know where to go. One shell exploded behind the monastery. Many shells exploded inside the camp. I can't say exactly how many but some exploded close to me, so close I thought I must have been hit. One of my nephews got a lot of debris on his head from an explosion and I thought that he was hit, but after I wiped off his head I realised that he was okay. Shells were exploding around other families too. They fired a lot.

Some people were burnt in the fire, their whole bodies. One was burnt to death. She was a young unmarried girl. She was 18 years old, and was a 10th standard student. Her name was Geh Moo Paw. Her two younger brothers are also schoolboys, her mother is a schoolteacher and her father is a Christian pastor [*her father, Saw Abraham, is the Seventh Day Adventist pastor, a sect particularly hated by DKBA because it is Gen Bo Mya's religion*]. The Yellow Headbands told them not to run: "If you run, we will shoot you". So they stayed under the burning house because they weren't allowed to run anywhere. They could get away only when the Yellow Headbands left there, and when they left their daughter was already burnt to death. All the family members were burnt.

The Yellow Headband soldiers said, "We will come back again. Now, who dares to come and face our challenge?" Everybody is afraid to face them. Some [*Thai*] soldiers were near the camp, but when they saw the Yellow Headband troops they ran away. Then the Yellow Headbands took the villagers' belongings, and after that they burned their houses. They also burned our hospital. They were yelling in loud voices but I don't know what they were yelling at. After that, they left the camp. A few minutes

later an aeroplane came and circled around, and they started shooting at the plane. The plane shot back two shots and then left. The soldiers didn't take anyone from the refugee camp, but they took one Thai policeman with them together with all his belongings, even his gun. We heard that later they released him with all his belongings. When the Thai police knew that one of their comrades was taken hostage they sent a message. That's when the plane came. After the plane left we watched and waited for the fire to stop. We were very hungry because we hadn't had any breakfast, but the fire kept burning on. Most of the people lost everything. After all the Yellow Headbands were gone, we started heading towards the main road and we went towards Paw Pa Hta to stay there [*the main road is the Mae Sot — Mae Sariang highway which passes Baw Noh, and Paw Pa Hta is about 20 km to the south*].

Six people were wounded. Some were burned by the fire and some were wounded by gunshots. The ones who were burnt were sent to Mae Tha Waw [*a big Thai village a few kilometres to the north*], and the others were taken to Sho Klo hospital where the doctor stays [*Sho Klo refugee camp, 20 km south, has a few foreign doctors*].

I saw maybe 40 soldiers. Only that many came inside the camp but many more were waiting outside. Some were wearing uniforms and others civilian clothes. There were no SLORC soldiers that I saw, all were Yellow Headbands. They said they would come back again. We dared not stay in this camp anymore. I can't bear anymore what they are doing to us. We don't want to go back to stay under SLORC anymore, so we have to try to face whatever we have to face right here.

[*The day before the attack*] the Thai police showed up and told all the refugees, "If you have any guns in your camp go and get them, because helicopters will come and more police will come too, and if they see that you have guns then there will be trouble for you." And [*the following morning*] they collected all the guns from the camp security forces. Then they left, and just a few minutes later the Yellow Headbands came in and started shooting and burning the camp.

[*An elder Karen woman refugee, married with small children, at Baw Noh added the following:*]

I want to move to another place but I have no money. I can't pay for my bus fare. I have to rely completely on my sister, because she has a small shop. We don't have anyone else. If we had some money we would flee to another place that would be safe for my children and I and where our house, our clothes and our belongings won't be burnt again. Yesterday, we moved to another place — Paw Pa Hta. We took nothing with us. The villagers at that place gave some food for us and the children. If we didn't have someone to give us food, we'd have nothing to eat. We stayed at Paw Pa Hta last night but we heard rumours that the Yellow Headbands will come and attack there, so now we have moved to another place again. We run

and run and run, and we can't do anything about it. Without food, without money, now we are surely refugees!

[Another Karen Buddhist refugee woman from the camp, a widow over 50, whose house was burned added the following:]

One of the soldiers said to the villagers, "Now you see DKBA soldiers! Are you afraid of us? We are going to continue burning your houses!" I said to them, "Why do you do this to us? We have only small houses. I am a widow. Please don't burn down my house. I have no husband and I am very poor. If you burn down my house, what will I do? Please don't." When they were leaving, one of them said, "These houses right here are Buddhist. Don't set them on fire." And they didn't. When they left the camp, I followed them with my little son in my arms, and when I reached the big bridge *[on the highway]* I ran to hide under the bridge. I saw two Thai policemen under there. They were calling me, "Come here. Come here." They were also afraid of the Yellow Headbands. I went to them. There were only two of them, and they were afraid. Our camp leader was in Mae Tha Waw *[village]*. If he had been in the camp they would have killed him for sure. He was lucky.

The Yellow Headbands said we all have to go back to the Burmese side. They said if we do not listen to their orders, they will come back again in the next few days, and then they will not burn anything down, they will just kill all the people they find in the camp. We are afraid to go back, and we are afraid to stay here. If we go back to Burma, we will have no money to survive there. We hope that our *[camp]* leaders will arrange another place for us to stay. We know that our leaders love us and we hope they will arrange another place for us where these people of our own national who oppress us cannot reach us, cannot touch us, cannot oppress us. I will say the truth. While we were staying in Burma, the Burmese were oppressing us in many ways. That's why we fled to Thailand, and while we are staying in Thailand we thank our *[refugee]* leaders very very much for the way they try their best to look after us. We don't want to go back to Burma to be oppressed and suffer so much pain. We want to stay here.

We have hope in our leaders and we thank them because they look after us. Now the Burmese want us to go back. If we go back, they will oppress us like before. We don't want to suffer like that anymore so we don't want to go back to Burma again. Now they've attacked our camp and taken everything from us, they didn't even leave us our torn longyis *[sarongs]*. More than that, they burnt everything. They didn't even leave a milk-tin of rice for us. Even when we wanted to run away for our lives because they'd set the village on fire, they wouldn't let us go. They wanted us to be killed in the camp. They said if we ran they would shoot us. That gives me so much pain. There are no longyis, no cooking pots, nothing left for us. They burned down everything, and they wanted us to be consumed by the fire too because they wouldn't let us go. We can't do anything. My heart is shattered into pieces. Our own national is oppressing us.

Interview: 52-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Execution, Religion, Child, Women, Detention, Slavery, Repatriation

Name : Saw Steven
 Age: 36
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion Christian
 Address : Baw Noh (Mae Tha Waw) Refugee Camp
 Interviewed: 29 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

My responsibility is security of the camp. The Yellow Headbands came into the camp at 9:10 a.m. yesterday. I think there were 100 of them. They were all wearing uniforms. They spoke to each other in Karen, but some didn't speak at all. I'm sure there were Burmese, because whenever they come there are always Burmese soldiers with them. This time I think the Burmese stayed on the other side of the [Moei] river, ready as reinforcements. They didn't come into the camp. Instead they were helping the Yellow Headbands by shelling into the camp. The shells exploded here, and there. All over the camp [he indicated the back half of the camp]. The Yellow Headbands entered the camp. They asked for money, gold and other belongings, and they took them. They were shooting their guns, AK47, M16, M79 grenade launcher and RPG [*rocket-propelled grenade*]. They shot everywhere they wanted, at the side of the mountain, at the trees, everywhere.

There was a little shooting with the Thai soldiers, and then they fled. The Thais had no casualties, but the Yellow Headbands suffered two wounded near the Thai police station. At the time, the Karens had been informed that a high-ranking Thai army officer would come to Baw Noh and the Thais told the Karen soldiers who provide security of the camp to hide their weapons, so we hid our weapons by burying them. Just after that, the Yellow Headbands came. There were five refugees wounded and one death, six casualties. The dead person was burnt to death, she was the daughter of Pastor Abraham. A group of Yellow Headbands came and asked, "Where does Abraham live?" They asked a lot about Abraham. The family was afraid to come out so they hid under the house, and their daughter was burnt to death. The Yellow Headbands set the house on fire. Geh Moo Paw was afraid to come out from under the house because of them, and she was burned to death. They also set the hospital, the school, and all the houses afire. Three people were wounded by fire — Pastor Abraham, his wife and their youngest child, a boy. The pastor is about 47. His wife is 39 or 40, and their son is 12-year old. They were sent to hospital by MSF [*Medecins Sans Frontieres*] team. They were staying under their house in holes with overhead protection, and they were afraid to come out because of the Yellow Headbands. Two people were wounded by splinters from 81 mm mortar shells [*which were fired from Burma*]. Each person was hit by two or three pieces of shrapnel, here, here, and here, one person by fragments in both shoulders and the nose, the other in the lower leg.

The Yellow Headbands were in the camp about one hour. They took three people with them — two Indians [Burmese Muslims] and one Karen. They released them all later. They also took some women to carry back the things they'd looted. They said that all people in the camp have to go back to the Burmese side. They said if we go back there will be peace for us but if we stay here there will be no peace. But the people in the camp realise that if they go back to Burma they surely cannot live peacefully, so they don't want to go back. They scattered in the jungle — some went upstream [*east into the hills further into Thailand*]. One or two families went back to Burma. I will stay here. I was given a responsibility and I will continue to carry out my duty.

DKBA soldiers are being used by SLORC. They were former KNU soldiers [*in reality, most of them are conscripted villagers — only a small percentage are former soldiers*]. They joined and co-operated with SLORC, and now SLORC is using them to attack us. DKBA soldiers have no political ideas. They are religious extremists and they are against us. They don't listen to KNU policies anymore. They are only fighting over religion. They are not fighting for their people anymore.

Interview: 53-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Repatriation

Name : Thra Kaser Doh
 Age: 54
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married with six children (age from 10 to 30 years)
 Address : Kamaw Lay Kho Refugee Camp
 Interviewed: 1 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

I am a refugee in this camp. I work as a member of the school committee. The Yellow Headbands came at 11:00 p.m. on 25 [April]. I was in my house, and I saw them. There were more than one hundred, wearing uniforms. About 50 or 60 soldiers entered the camp. Half were DKBA, and half were SLORC soldiers. I can't say exactly how many because we couldn't follow them and check, but with my own eyes I saw 10 SLORC soldiers. Some of them were also hiding in other places. I could tell they were SLORC because they had different arm badges. I could see the difference in the arm badges, but I couldn't see their division or battalion numbers because we were running from them. It was night time and I could only see from a short distance. SLORC arm badges were red. DKBA soldiers' badges were white [*SLORC badges are red with a white symbol on them, and DKBA badges are pale yellow with white*]. I heard the Yellow Headbands talking, sometimes in Sgaw Karen, sometimes in Pwo Karen and sometimes in Burmese. Some had western Pwo Karen accents.

The soldiers entered the camp from every direction. They came in from the school side, they stood at the school and started shelling the camp with RPG-7, RPG-2, M79 grenade launchers and 60 mm mortars [*RPG-7 & RPG-2 are two types of Rocket Propelled Grenade*]. They also fired small arms. Some shot into the air and some shot at the surface of the ground. There was so much shooting. My house was hit by several bullets, and some shells exploded very close to me. When they started setting fire to the houses, some Yellow Headbands allowed people to try to stop the fire but the Burmese soldiers did not allow it — they did not even allow people to get out of their houses, but people jumped down and ran away anyway. Most of the Burmese soldiers were in the market [*section of the camp*]. Some soldiers shot the houses and made them burn [*with RPGs, grenades or tracer bullets*] and some set fire to the houses with lighters. They started by setting the middle school on fire, then they came into the village and set fire the houses afire. The fire spread because of the wind. One person was slightly wounded, Eh Pree Pa. He is about 32 years old. He was wounded in his leg by RPG shrapnel.

The soldiers stayed in the camp until 00:30 a.m., maybe a bit earlier, then they left. They tried to look for the camp leaders but everyone had run away so there was nothing they could do. All the refugees ran away — some took refuge in the monastery. The soldiers took everything they found in the village, even the biscuits for small children. Later they carried their looting back by themselves. They captured three young boys, took them to the village cemetery and released them there. They released the three boys with a message that all the refugees have to go back to Burma within two days. They said if the villagers do not listen, they will come back again and then the refugees will see!

After they left some of the refugees came back, but most slept outside the camp. Some haven't come back yet, even now. We don't know what to do. If our leaders ask us to stay here, we will stay. We've decided to stay because if we move to a new place, it will be very difficult for us to build new houses and also for other things. We have to find leaves for our roof, bamboo for houses and things like that. So we hope our leaders will arrange for us to stay here the whole rainy season. We don't want to go to any big camp [*referring to the Thai plan to move all the refugees into big closed camps*]. We want to stay here. If they treat the refugees like in Bangladesh or the Cambodian border, then we can't go outside the camp to get vegetables or hunt. It will be hard for us to get enough food, and we won't be free.

[*When the soldiers came*] there were four Thai police staying at the checkpoint [*along the highway at the north-east end of the camp — one group of soldiers entered the camp this way*]. They didn't shoot, they were afraid. Now there is no Thai soldier here, and there is no Karen soldier either. DKBA are SLORC's slaves, and SLORC are using them. When they realise that they cannot use them anymore, they will kill them all. If we go to live in Khaw Taw [*Myaing Gyi Ngu, DKBA headquarters*], we will have to drink the monk's medicine and worship him — otherwise you cannot go there.

Interview: 54-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood

Name : Thra Baw Po
 Age: 46
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion Christian
 Family: Married with nine children (age from 18 months to 30 years)
 Address : Kamaw Lay Kho Refugee Camp
 Interviewed: 1 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

When they came, I was in my house. I was sleeping with my children. I didn't see them at first. After they started shooting and came into the camp I saw them. I woke up and put my children in a hole in the ground. They entered the village and kept shooting more. Then we went outside the camp and up a small hill. I could see them start moving everywhere through the camp shouting, yelling, cursing, and they started setting the houses afire. They did whatever they wanted in the camp, and we could only watch them from a distance. My house was completely burnt down. I have nothing left. This bag is my house now. [*He showed his small Karen cloth shoulder bag.*]

Interview: 55-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Repatriation,

Name : Naw Say
 Age: 46
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion Christian
 Family: Married with one child (age 23 years)
 Address : Kamaw Lay Kho Refugee Camp
 Interviewed: 1 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

When they came on 25 [April], I was in my house. We were all in our houses sleeping. I woke up and heard gunshots at about 11:00 p.m. and ran away. I saw them. They were wearing uniforms. I saw one Yellow Headband soldier with a porter. I think there were some SLORC soldiers with them because some of them could not speak Karen. While I was running away from the camp, one Yellow Headband soldier stepped on my foot. I told him, "Are you blind?" Then I looked up at him and saw the yellow headband on his head, and I didn't say anything else and ran. Then I saw another one just wandering around the camp. He asked me, "Where did all my friends go?" I told him, "I don't know. Maybe they went that way", and I pointed to the river [*towards Burma*].

I saw them setting the houses on fire. I managed to come back and stop the fire at my house. I could save some of my belongings. I can still live in my own house, because it didn't burn completely. If they come back again, I will run away. If they tell me to go to Khaw Taw, I will not go. If they [*refugee leaders*] arrange a place for us where we don't have to be afraid of the Yellow Headbands, I will go and stay there.

Interview: 56-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Disappearance

Name : Saw Lah
 Age: 34
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion Christian
 Family: Married with three children (age from 4 to 8 years)
 Address : Kamaw Lay Kho Refugee Camp
 Interviewed: 1 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

We rely on our leaders to arrange something for us. Many people are going back to Burma, but not me. I will wait and see what our leaders will arrange for us. DKBA and SLORC soldiers are the same. We do not believe them. So I have decided not to go back. We want to live in peace. We hope that big countries in the outside world will help us to live in peace.

Interview: 57-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Execution

Name : Saw Lar Wah
 Age: 30
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion Christian
 Family: Married with three children (age 3 months and 3 to 4 years)
 Address : Hlaing Bwe Township, now at the Don Pa Kiang (Huay Bone) Refugee camp, Thailand
 Source: KHRG

[*Saw Tha Po, age 41 and father of 3, was a Karen Buddhist refugee in Huay Bone (Don Pa Kiang) refugee camp, 20km north of the Thai border town of Mae Sot. On 25 March 1995 he crossed the Moei River to gather charcoal and never came back, shot dead by SLORC troops only 500m from the border.*]

I am from Pee Ta Ka village, Hlaing Bwe Township in Karen State. Now I have

been in this camp four years already. On 25 March, I crossed the other side [of the Moei River, which is the border] to burn wood to make charcoal. We went 10 minutes' walk from the river. There were only two of us. While we were collecting our charcoal, the SLORC troops came. It was 11:00 a.m. We'd only finished filling two sacks. I heard footsteps because I was sitting facing toward them. My friend was facing the other way so he didn't see them. Me, I saw one soldier. He shouted, "Don't run!" and started shooting at the same time. I was already running. We were scrambling to get away on all fours, like dogs. I ran and I didn't know what happened behind me, what happened to my friend. The soldiers were yelling but I couldn't understand because I was running. I can't say how many shots there were, just Bang Bang three shots, and after that a lot, I can't say. I saw only one soldier. His face was blackened and he had a carbine. First he fired three shots from his carbine, and those shots were for me. The first, second and third shots were at me. Then I heard the sounds of G2 or G3 [Burma Army automatic assault rifles], a lot. I ran straight back to the camp without hiding or resting on the way.

I didn't know or see that Tha Po was hit. I didn't know anything. We were separate, he ran his way and I ran mine. The same day at 4:00 p.m., some of my friends and I went back to search for him. Oh, so many of us went. We found his body very far from the place where we went for charcoal, about as far as from here to the church [over 100m]. He was laying on his side with a wound just on his leg. He was hit on his left [lower] leg. The flesh and the bone were blown apart — there was only one bone left. It had bled a lot. He bled to death. I can't say if they tortured him because the body was black and swollen. I didn't see any injury on the other parts of his body. Presumably, he tried very hard to get back [to the river]. He'd taken off his shirt, grabbed some leaves and tried to wrap them around his wound. But when we found his body, it had fallen off his leg. The wound was so bad and the bone was torn apart.

I don't know how many soldiers were there. We dared not check because we were afraid they might still be staying nearby, so we only looked for the body and didn't stay long. I passed the place where they were when they shot at me and I saw some rounds from carbine but I didn't look closely. We were afraid so we only hurried to find the body. Now I'm afraid to go back again. I went back anyway to get my charcoal, but all of it had already been taken.

[Halfway down Tha Po's left shin had been blow apart — the flesh was shattered and the bones were sticking out sideways several inches. This was probably caused by a type of G3/G4 assault rifle bullet that essentially is shattered on hitting something, causing it to rip people to shreds. It is quite common to bleed to death or die from shock after being hit by such a bullet even in the arm or leg. According to a nurse at the camp hospital, when they got Tha Po's body back to the camp and washed it, it was bluish-black, presumably because he had bled to death. After shooting him the SLORC troops probably never even looked for the body — they generally only look for a body if they think it may be someone with a gun they can

capture, but as for unarmed villagers they just shoot them and leave them to die in the bush. A group of people from another village saw the soldiers after the attack, and reported that they were seven soldiers from SLORC LIB 9 of LID 44, commanded by Coy Comdr Khine Zaw Lin. LIB 9 has since been rotated out of the area and replaced by IB 81, under the same Division. SLORC has recently moved 1,500 more troops into the area, despite the fact that there is no fighting going on there.]

Interview: 58-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Execution

Name : Naw Chit
 Age: 35
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion Buddhist
 Family: Married with three children (age 5 to 15 years)
 Address : Don Pa Kiang (Huay Bone) Refugee camp, Thailand
 Source: KHRG

[Naw Chit is the widow of Saw Tha Po. See Interview: 58]

My husband was about 40 years old. I woke up in the morning and my husband said we had no charcoal left, so he would go to the other side of the river and bring back charcoal. I told him, "Wait for awhile. Don't go now." I tried to stop him because my injured leg was shaking a lot, and he said the skin on his body was also shaking [*this is a bad omen*]. I told him, "We both have shaking in our skin, so don't go." But he said, "Do you have any charcoal?" I said, "No", so he said, "We have no charcoal in the house, so I'll have to go." Even that morning we had no charcoal to cook, so my husband told me to go borrow some from the neighbours and tell them we'd pay it back when he returned. He said he had to go in a hurry because if the Burmese came around then he dared not go anymore.

A while after they'd gone, Saw Ler Wah came and asked me, "Sister, has my friend come home yet?" I said no, and he said, "Eh, when we were over there the Burmese soldiers came and shot very close to us." I went to the river back and I saw many people there. So I asked them to go across with me to look for my husband. But they said, "We don't dare go across because maybe the SLORC soldiers are still there". So I didn't force them to go and I came back home. We waited a few hours, then at about 3:00 or 4:00 p.m. we went across the river to search for my husband.

With three children, now that my husband is dead I don't know what I'm going to do for the future. Now I have only my eldest son to rely on. I can't do anything.

Interview: 59-HRV: Execution, Livelihood, Torture, Slavery, Disappearance

Name : Ko Sein Myint
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Address : Nyaunglebin District, Pegu Division

[Ko Sein Myint has now left his village to stay in Karen-controlled area.]

On 21 November [1994] the SLORC soldiers killed Saw Bee. He was 59 years old. His father's name was U Maung Nyo and his mother's name was Daw Thu. He lived in Gaw Tha Zin village, P'Deh Gaw village-tract, Shwegyin Township. He was a Karen Christian. He had a paddy field, growing paddy and growing crops. There are eight members in his family. His wife is Naw Dee Heh and they have six children. The eldest is a girl, 28 years old, and the youngest is a boy, 11 years.

Ko Saw Bee and I had lived together in Gaw Tha Zin village since our childhood days. We were friends since childhood, going everywhere together. He didn't encourage or support any political group, he was just a simple and honest man. He worked in his fields to grow paddy and other crops to feed his family. Then, he was killed very cruelly by SLORC. It's not just at all. On 18 November, he went to Nyaunglebin Town to buy provisions for his family. He returned on 20 November. When he crossed the Sittang River by a ferry it was about 6:30 p.m., a little late. SLORC troops from IB 351 were near Nga Deh village and he encountered them there. That group is from Bo Dah camp, they are controlled by Bn Comdr Lt-Col Kyaw Kyaw. The patrolling column officer is Capt Hla Myint. When they searched his bag they found cakes for his children and a little medicine. The SLORC men were suspicious. They asked him if he was a "ringworm" [*Karen soldier*]. They tied his hands and brought him to Gaw Tha Zin village. They took him to Tamla Wah's house, ordered everyone in the house to come out and then took Ko Saw Bee into the house. It was about 8:00 p.m. SLORC soldiers came one after another and hit and punched Ko Saw Bee all night long. I heard them the whole night long until the morning. Ko Saw Bee asked them to call the village elder, but the SLORC soldiers did not call him. The beating and shouting went on the whole night. They kept him in the house, and I saw four young SLORC soldiers in the house. I heard their beating and swearing and also Ko Saw Bee's shouting.

On 21 November, I didn't hear Ko Saw Bee's voice anymore. About 6:00 p.m. a sergeant went into the house. This sergeant was drunk. Then at about 8:00 p.m., they took Ko Saw Bee away from the village about 250 yards, towards Kyun Su village. About half an hour later, I heard five gunshots. A little while after the shooting the same group of soldiers returned to the village. They called the village elder and told him that the rebel they'd captured had escaped. They ordered the village elder to go search for him, but he said he didn't dare. The soldiers spent that night in the

U village and took all the villagers' chickens and ducks without paying. The following morning, when the young cowherds went out past where Ko Saw Bee had been shot, they saw his corpse not completely buried. They came back and told the village elder. When the troops heard about this they said, "Don't go to that place. If you go near that place then you are rebels or relatives of rebels". They threatened the villagers.

At about noon on that day, they said they would clear all the trees near the village. They rounded up men, women, and even schoolboys from the village. They took a lot of rice and fish paste from the villagers by force and set out towards Bone Tha Dah. On the day Ko Saw Bee was arrested, his family was so scared that they ran away from the village. I don't know where they went.

D There are about 40 house in Gaw Tha Zin village. Most of the people are Karen. Only a small number work on the land to grow paddy and other crops. The rest are just living from hand to mouth. They go to the hills to pick dog-fruit or pan for gold. Some buy and sell things. This is how they survive. Now the people who gather food from the hills are forbidden from going there by the SLORC soldiers, so they can't get enough to live. In 1994, all the paddy crops were destroyed because of flood. So it is not easy to survive. Moreover, every week six villagers have to go to do sentry duty. If they can't go they have to pay 300 Ks to Lt-Col Kyaw Kyaw at IB 351. Now they are also recruiting porters by force. If you can't go you have to pay them 2,000 Ks. If you can't pay, you have to go as a porter, and you suffer from diseases three to five months after your return. Among those who return to the village, some are crippled. Some die from exhaustion, and some have lost their legs. Two people from the village lost their legs this way, and the rest who come back are too feeble to live normal lives anymore.

R Gaw Tha Zin village is on the road from Kyauk Kyi to Shwegyin, about nine miles from Shwegyin. We have a primary and middle school and also a church. The school has seven teachers. The villagers hire them and pay them. Since 1993, nobody wants to be a village elder, so people have to take turns serving as elders for one week. Under SLORC, nobody wants to be a village elder. Our village is at the foot of the hills, so SLORC regards it as a "black" area [*rebel-infiltrated area*]. If anything happens, they summon the elders and abuse and curse them. Depending on their mood, they sometimes immerse the elders in water. We must send information to Bo Dah camp. Every day, they ask if we have any news to report. If we say there is no news but they say there is, then if they are drunk they beat us and punish us.

H When the patrolling column comes, there is another problem. They say they are in difficulties so they force the villagers to buy their rations. They sell their rice at 40 Ks for one pyi [*about 1.5 kg*]. When they've eaten what's left of their rations, they collect provisions from the villagers. So nobody wants to be a village elder. Before under the Ma Sa La [*Na Win's Burma Socialist Programme Party*] and now under SLORC we lose all our rights. Under this bad regime some die, some starve, the

lives of people are ruined — we suffer different kinds of hardships. Everyone suffers. If we can be free from this bad regime, in the future we want to live like our ancestors, our families together with our whole village — we want to be able to work in our fields, free in our hearts and in our bodies. This is my longing and my hope.

Interview: 60-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture, Livelihood

Name : U Nyunt Thein
 Age: 56
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion Buddhist
 Occupation: Hairdresser
 Family: Divorced, four children (age 14 years and up)
 Address : Letpadan Township, Tharawaddy District
 (about 100 km, northwest of Rangoon)
 Source: KHRG

On 5 February [1995], as I was returning from Atee Pine at midnight, I was captured on the road by a policeman from Tharawaw. There were about six of them. He said he wanted to see me at the police station for a while and would release me in the morning. He took me home and I packed a bag with a blanket, then I was taken to the police station and put in the lockup with sixteen others. We were all from different villages. I knew just one or two of them, from Ye Shan, Weh Gyi and Thayet Chaung villages. As soon as the dawn breaks, at about 4:00 a.m., we were sent to Meik Ta Ma and Letpadan by train. There were five policemen accompanying us, but we were not handcuffed. We stayed in Letpadan lockup for two days, then we were sent to Kyauk Kyi by truck. It took the whole right. In Kyauk Kyi, we were put in a big warehouse. The place was packed — there were about 200 of us. Some slept upstairs and others downstairs. There were only men. We stayed there for three days. We were fed at 1:00 p.m., but mostly we had to buy rice packets at the price of 35 Ks per packet from the stall.

From there they sent us to Moo Thet. I had to carry a 40-pound-weight rice sack with my hands tied. All of our hands were tied to the porters in front of us. We were with Kyauk Kyi-based IB 60. There were a lot of them, I couldn't guess how many. From there we were sent to Baw Ser Ko, and we were kept there for three or four days locked up in a pig sty. We couldn't escape. Four or five porters ran away but they were recaptured in the morning. Then, they were interrogated and tortured in various ways by the soldiers. One officer from IB 48 poured hot water on the five porters. A sergeant beat their legs like he was mincing meat and said to them, "Run away again. Run away again." They beat the porters around their waists and punched their faces, and please pardon me but they swore "*Nga loe ma tha!*" [*literally translates as "you were born by my fucking", i.e. "you're my illegitimate bastard"*].

Some porters lost their teeth.. Some of the porters were elderly men too.

They fed us rice and salt. Seven men had to share two mess-tins, twice a day. Sometimes, there wasn't even salt. When the soldiers rested, we could rest — when they didn't, we had to go without rest. When we tottered from lack of rest they beat us. When we lagged behind, we were flogged. They yelled, "Catch up. Stay close. Catch up and follow close. If your stepfathers see you, you'll die! Follow close!" [*in Burmese idiom, stepfathers are always cruel to their stepchildren.*] I walked on gravel and hurt my feet. The medics gave me two pills and applied yellow liquid [*antiseptic*] just once, then they never treated me again.

From Baw Ser Ko, they divided [*into columns*]. I was with Heavy Artillery Company of IB 264. There were about three porters for every soldier. We went very far, and for several nights we slept on the mountains, but I didn't know what mountains they were. After three nights we ran out of food so we had to take paddy from the rebel camps, pound it and eat it [*there is no way SLORC could take rice so easily from "rebel camps" — they were probably stealing rice from Karen villages, and the soldiers were calling the villages "rebel camps" to justify looting them. This gives an interesting insight into the way SLORC troops consider villagers*]. From there, we had to go halfway back to Baw Ser Ko for supplies, then to Papun District [*to the south*] to carry provisions. Eight porters ran away and the salt bags they left behind then had to be carried by the porters who were left. If we couldn't carry, we were kicked from behind by their boots or beaten with sticks. They said, "You have to carry what the other porters have left behind". I was kicked, and so were about eight or nine other elderly men. Whenever we couldn't climb, we were poked with carbines [*M1 carbine rifle barrels*]. They struck us with carbines and hit us in the belly. The following day at about 1:00 or 2:00 p.m., I couldn't carry anymore, so I said, "Officers and sergeants, I can't carry anymore". They said, "What? Can't carry? *Nga lohe ma tha!* You ate our provisions, you took our money. Why can't you carry? Go on, carry!!" I wasn't paid, I was conscripted. They thought I took money to come as a porter! Two soldiers then put a jacket around my neck and started pulling me along. I was being pulled and beaten all along the way. One of the soldiers had stripes [*sergeant or corporal*] and the other had none. I went on for one more mile. I begged in various ways. I was beaten and kicked with boots all the way. I was struck not less than 30 or 40 times. The officer hit me from behind with my own walking stick and broke it over me. I too became stubborn. I said, "If you want to kill me, go ahead!" As I could no longer go on, I threw myself down. The soldiers just said, "Die then, You just die. Let the ringworm kill you". And they just left me behind. My friends tried to take me along. They said, "Do come along. Just come slowly, slowly uncle", and the elderly men said, "Try, elder brother." But the soldiers didn't say anything encouraging. Instead they said, "Let him die. This old man, just leave him behind". They took my bag which had my blanket, three 90-Ks notes and a lighter and made one of the porters carry it. They said, "He'll only come after us if we take his belongings." The soldiers took away the two bombs which I had tried to carry with such difficulty.

I couldn't go on. I just stayed where I fell. I was angry in my heart. They deliberately call the civilians and then torture us. It is the same as killing us. I don't even want to look at them again. In my heart, I feel this way. After that I saw the revolutionaries and they fed me and provided medical treatment to me, so I really want to thank them. If they hadn't rescued me, I'd be dead because SLORC left me behind. I'll never forget their kindness. Compared to what SLORC says, it's like the difference between black iron and silver [*night and day*]. The SLORC troops said, "We have to attack the rebel camps. We have to cut their supplies, and they'll surrender." They told us, "They [*rebels*] won't even spend one bullet for your life. They'll hate you for helping us to attack them." But the reality is that they fed me, cured me and took care of me. I'll never forget that. I wish and I pray that SLORC will collapse soon and that the revolutionaries will win the war. I want you to send me back when I'm cured, and then I will explain to the civilians that I myself saw that the SLORC's stories are wrong. I'll share all my own experiences.

Interview: 61-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture, Livelihood

Name : Kyaw Htun
 Age: 19
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single, three brothers and sisters
 Address : Taunggyi Town, southern Shan State
 Source: KHRG

I left Taunggyi for Rangoon on 4 January [1995]. When I arrived at Nyaunglebin [*about 150 km north of Rangoon*], IB 59 parked a truck at the railway station. I was hungry so I got off the train, and when I was buying some rice a soldier came and grabbed my collar. I asked him, "What have I done?" He said, "Don't say a word". And he took me to the back of the truck and tied up my hands. "Why do you tie me up?", I asked. "Shut up", he said, and he kicked me and hauled me onto the truck. It was about half past twelve when we left. There were about 30 of us on the truck. We crossed the Sittang River, then we reached to the barrack of IB 60. We slept one night there, then in the morning I was forced to carry ammunition and rice. It weighed about 24 viss (about 38 kg). We slept one night on the way, then we came to a place called Moo Thet, I think. There were about 600 porters and 1,200 SLORC soldiers. Then we went to Baw Ser Ko and slept there. The following night we slept in a field, then we climbed the top of a mountain and slept there. That afternoon, there was fighting. We came down into a valley and then to a village. In the village, we had to slaughter pigs and chickens. Then the soldiers cooked them, but they didn't give us any. We never got enough food. Four people had to share one mess-tin of rice. At the beginning they tied us up at night, but after 15 or 16 days they didn't tie us anymore. There were seven in my group, and we were all tied together.

Later, we returned and spent seven nights on the way back. On the eighth day, the Strategic Command changed [*new battalions were brought in*]. There we set out in the afternoon and kept going until nightfall. At about 8:00 p.m. I could no longer climb the mountain, and I was beaten with a bamboo. There were elderly men with us too, and 13 of them were beaten. One elderly man couldn't go on. They beat his head with a gun and his head was injured. He was not treated or left behind, we all just kept going forward. When we got sick and asked for pills they just said, "They are not sweets!" Later as we continued, we came to a mountain range and there was more fighting. Then we continued, and it was about 4:30 p.m. when we heard someone stepping on a land-mine. One elderly man porter was killed and one soldier disappeared. Another porter's foot was blown off, and a third porter lost one foot and had his other foot crushed. We continued on our journey. The following morning we came to a village, and the soldiers took all the paddy and rice and made us slaughter the chickens and pigs. Then we cooked and they ate, but we weren't given any of them. Two days later, we came to a village where we made a temporary camp. About 7:30 p.m., I told an officer I was going to relieve myself, and I escaped.

The following day at 3:30 p.m., I saw a village and I met rebel soldiers. They were good to me. We ate together, and they brought me along. I asked them for clothes and they gave me some. All my clothes were left on the train when I was captured, and Capt Ba Thein took the money -- 2,400 Ks in cash — I had. He said he would pay it back when I returned home. There were three SLORC columns that came along — IBs 59 and 264, and the Strategic Command. I was a porter for one month and seven days. I want to go back home to see my mother.

Interview: 62-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Livelihood, Disappearance

Name : Ko Tin Tun
 Age: 19
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion Buddhist
 Occupation: Deep sea fisherman
 Family: Single, four brothers and sisters
 Address : Bassein, Irrawaddy Delta
 Source: KHRG

I left home on 1 January [1995]. My father was ill, so I went to see my aunt at Oktwin. I took the Bassein launch to Rangoon. I slept one night in Rangoon, then at 3:00 p.m. the following day, I left for Oktwin by train [*Oktwin is just south of Taungoo, about 250 km north of Rangoon*]. I travelled by train the whole night. At Oktwin, a policeman checked my ticket. Then someone else came and took me to his house. There were six others there besides me. I was kept in the house for two days. Then we were taken to the Police Station where we slept one night. At the

Police Station, they took away my spare clothes and my National Registration Card. Then in the morning, we were sent to Kyauk Kyi by truck. We spent one night on the way, then we arrived at Kyauk Kyi at 3:00 p.m. the following day. At Kyauk Kyi, all the porters had to sleep in a field. There were about 50 of us, all men, but some escaped. After one night, we had to carry rice sacks and other provisions. I had to carry rice, not quite one basket [*one basket weighs about 33 kg.*]. We went forward and reached a jungle camp. We slept there one night, then continued our journey. There were about 60 soldiers from IB 59. We reached to a large village, and there was fighting between the rebels and SLORC. We spent two nights in the jungle, then we reached another village. There was shooting again. After the shooting, we slept there one night, then we went on to a small village, and then to this village. We arrived here at about 9 O'clock. I was seriously ill and fell unconscious. We had to sleep in the pig sty, nine of us. I was unconscious the whole night. When I awoke I didn't see anyone. Then I saw a rebel soldier. When they found I had no food, they gave me some. I was afraid to go anywhere, so I still stayed in the pig sty. Now I want to go home. I don't know if my father is dead or alive.

Interview: 63-HRV: Livelihood, Torture

[*The following report was received from a human rights monitor in the Kya Inn Seik Gyi area*]

Source: KHRG

Pee Setan village is 10 miles north-east of Kya In Seik Gyi Town, Karen State. Soldiers of IB 62 have a camp five miles from the village, so they often come to loot the village.

On 21 February 1995, a mobile column from IB 62 led by Major Ohn Myint came into the village. There was some fighting with Karen forces who were in the village at the time, and the SLORC troops withdrew to the Nyaung Gone quarter of the village and burnt that part of the village down. While the village was on fire the villagers fled, including U Bu Ghay, male, age 52, a Karen Buddhist farmer. While people were running, the SLORC troops arrested him, tied his wrists behind his back and tortured him in many ways — kicking his head and chest with their boots and beating him with a stick. He suffered head injuries and his face was covered with blood. The soldiers walked on his legs and rolled a bamboo up and down on his shins [*a particularly painful form of torture*]. They forced his head back, put a thin piece of cloth on his face and poured water into his nose.

The soldiers then took him to his house in the village. In his house, they searched for belongings and arrested his wife, Naw Ler Moe. They tied her wrists behind her back with a rope, walked on her legs, covered her face with plastic and poured water into her nose. Then they took U Bu Ghay and Naw Lar Moe back to Nyaung Gone quarter of the village. They released her but took him to Kyaung Hna Kwa village.

The following day, the village head along with U Bu Ghay's sister and daughters went to Kyaung Hna Kwa, and the SLORC troops demanded a bribe of 10,000 Ks to release U Bu Ghay. The villagers apologised the soldiers [*that there had been fighting in the village*] and paid 5,000 Ks. Then U Bu Ghay was released. He couldn't get back to his village because of his injuries, so he was given treatment by the villagers at Than Pa Yah village. He and his wife dared not stay in their home village any longer.

[*Note: IB 62 gained notoriety in July 1994 when it attacked Halockhani refugee camp, a camp of four to six thousand Mon refugees who had been forcibly repatriated by the Thai Army to a site just inside Burma south of Three Pagodas Pass. The attack on Halockhani was also led by Maj Ohn Myint. At the time, he and IB 62 were being rotated out of their station at Three Pagodas Pass to Ye. They are now based in Kya Inn Seik Gyi township, and Maj Ohn Myint has obviously not been demoted or otherwise discouraged from continuing his burning and torturing ways.*]

Interview: 64-HRV: Detention, Women, Torture, Execution, Livelihood

Name : Pi Eh Wah
 Age: 54
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Pwo Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Family: Married with two sons and five daughters
 Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State

Name : Naw Paw Htoo
 Age: 35
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Pwo Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Family: Married with four sons and three daughters
 Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Source: KHRG

[*Pi Eh Wah used to be village LORC chairperson (SLORC-appointed village head) in her village. Naw Paw Htoo is Pi Eh Wah's eldest daughter, and Aye Myint, age 23, is her youngest. All of them, as well as Pi Eh Wah's son Saw Htoo Klih, were arrested and tortured after people in her village helped two young SLORC Army deserters to contact a Karen army unit.*]

Pi Eh Wah: On 8 December 1994, SLORC came at night. They wanted to catch my

husband but he wasn't there, so they caught me. I said, "My husband went out to catch prawns with his son". When my son came back they asked him, "Where is your father?" My son said, "He wasn't with me, he went to the lake." The soldiers stayed all night around our house to catch my husband. Then they ordered my son to go look for his father. I wanted to go look but they wouldn't let me. They told my daughter to go. She found her father in the fields, but he was afraid and wouldn't come, so she came back alone. When she came back, first the soldiers arrested me. Second, my son Saw Htoo Klih, and then [*my daughters*] Aye Myint and Naw Paw Htoo. They took us away separately in different directions. I said to them, "My son and daughters don't know anything. If there is a problem, it is with my husband and I. If you want to do something do it to me, not to my children." First they took me to Ma Nyo's house. There they caught Ohn Kyi, tied him and beat him. Later, he managed to untie the rope and escaped. He ran away and never came back. Then they said they were taking me to the monastery. When we left the house, the commander took my son [Saw Htoo Klih] and tied his hands behind his back. They took us to the school, but different parts of the school — one up and one down. They also took Aye Myint to the school, but then they took her to Ywa Dan Shay village. There they treated her badly in many ways. They put a plastic bag over her head and poured water on it [*so she couldn't breathe — the bag may have been nylon, which becomes airtight when wet. SLORC often uses this form of torture because it is more convenient than constantly having to remove and replace a plastic bag*]. At the school they tied me, they covered my head with plastic and poured water on it. Then they interrogated me. They asked about two soldiers: "Did you send the soldiers?" And I said, "Yes, I sent them." Then they threatened me. [*two SLORC soldiers had deserted and asked to be taken to a Karen unit, and the villagers had helped them.*] I told them truthfully. Then they beat me, and they covered my head with plastic and poured water into my nose. I pleaded with them not to beat my children. I said, "If you want to beat them, please beat me instead", because I was only worried for them. But they beat my children anyway! The soldiers were interrogating and beating me behind the bushes while their leader Zaw Ko Ko was waiting in the school. He could hear when I was screaming. The soldiers said, "Your husband fled, so we've got you and we can do anything we want to you!" I just said, "Don't hit my children, because they don't know anything." I don't think the two soldiers who fled were from Zaw Ko Ko's group, they were from Coy 3. They were simple soldiers, privates.

At 7:00 p.m., the troops combined together and took us toward Ywa Dan Shay village. The commander's name is Aung Khaing. When we got to the bridge, he left my son behind, tied to the bridge. He said to me, "Go quickly!" Then I met my daughter [*Aye Myint*]. She was paralysed with fear and she said she didn't want to live anymore because the soldiers hit her and she was in much pain. Aye Myint said, "My life is not like other people's. They sank me in a well, they beat me and did many things and they almost raped me." What had the soldiers done to her? I don't know. From 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., I don't know what they did to her. At about 10:00 p.m., she came back to the village. We met there after we were released.

The soldiers told us to go back to our house and sleep quietly, so we went back and slept.

Naw Paw Htoo: When they came to my house [*in another village*], they asked for my father and asked whether he was living there or not. My husband was sick on his bed and the soldier asked how long he'd been sick. I said, "Over one month, so I never went to my mother's house, and my father rarely comes here." I said, "If you want to arrest me then arrest me, but please release my sister because she is not well." My sister had a new-born baby and she had malaria. The soldier said, "If we release her, what will the commander say when we get back to the camp?" He was a sergeant. He said, "Go and ask some other sergeants to release your sister!" They told us they were punishing us under Section 17/1, and that we were collaborating with Karen soldiers [Section 17/1 bans any contact with "illegal" parties or organisations]. They took me along with my sister and her baby. When we arrived at the stream the baby vomited and my sister gave him water. The soldiers and I walked along the paddy-field dikes, but my sister followed the stream. When the commander saw the baby vomiting, he allowed her to go back. He told her, "If you see your father, tell him to come to us", and they took only me. When we got to the soldiers' place, they sent me to the medic and he gave me an injection, then they sent me to Auntie Phone's house. I heard they had already taken my mother to Ma Nyo's house, and I was afraid. At 7:30 p.m., they came and took me. They kept me near Naw Aye's house for a long time, then my mother came and they took us to Hlaing Yu Kee. They released us at 10:00 or 10:30 p.m.

The soldiers said, "Go and sleep well at your home!" We were very happy because they were releasing us. When they released my brother they asked, "Is your family now together?" "Yes", I answered. We went to our house together with two village headwomen, then the soldiers called the headwomen and went away, so for a moment our family was alone at home. We put candles in the altar. Later, the soldiers came back, and there were soldiers around and under the house. When one of our candles had died out and the other was nearly gone, the soldiers called us, "Please wake up because our commander calls you." So we thought the commander would ask us questions. They said, "Wake up quickly". My sister [*Aye Myint*] couldn't get up quickly because she was still in pain. I took a sarong and went to her. The soldier called, "Is she sleeping?" Then my sister woke up immediately and she was very afraid. Then I heard a gunshot, and I fell down.

Pi Eh Wah: She was standing and her leg was hit. My younger daughter [*Aye Myint*] fell back and I saw her intestines come out. She was hit in the leg also. She was screaming, and she rolled over again and again until she died. The following morning, I saw that the bullet had gone right through her body. She was laying face down and she was dead. Aye Myint was 23 years old.

Naw Paw Htoo: She was between my mother and me. I told her to try not to roll on top of her baby. I said, "Try not to scream, or maybe they will come and shoot us

again.” The soldiers were outside the house. When they fired, one bullet hit the frame of the house and a splinter of wood hit me in my belly — later the doctor removed it at the hospital.

Aye Myint had two children, both girls. Her husband had already died. The villagers held a funeral for her the following morning.

Pi Eh Wah: I was hit by one bullet near my breast which came out in my back. Naw Paw Htoo had six wounds in her right leg, and a bullet also passed right through her left leg. She also had a bullet in her stomach [*probably the wood splinter Naw Paw Htoo mentioned*], and later they had to operate on her stomach to get it out. My grandchild was sleeping with us and his blanket was torn by a bullet but luckily he wasn’t hurt. The blanket of Aye Myint’s baby was also torn by a bullet but she wasn’t hurt either. My son [*Saw Htoo Klih*] laid down over me while they were shooting, and he pretended that he was dead. When it was silent again, Naw Paw Htoo called him and asked, “Are you hurt?” He said, “No.” She said, “If you aren’t hurt, please go!” After he left, he could hear us moaning from the other side of the river, but he couldn’t come back [*to warn us*] because he had to run. [*His sister told him to run because being a young man, the soldiers would accuse him of being a Karen soldier, use this as an excuse for the shooting and probably execute him as well.*]

The soldiers released us at 10:00 p.m., and they shot us at about midnight. They were from IB 231. Their battalion commander is Bo Aung Khaing. The troops who shot us were with Zaw Ko Ko, he was the operation commander. He is a company commander. When they called us, one soldier came into the house and three or more stayed under the house. Two of them were Myint Zaw and Thein Win. They have two stripes [*Corporals*].

For the whole night, we didn’t receive any treatment. Two other villagers looked after us and Naw Paw Htoo’s daughter. In the morning, the other villagers came to give us some injections. When the doctor [*probably not a real doctor, just the person in the village who knows something about medicines and therefore acts as a doctor*] came to give injections, he was very afraid. The villagers went to An Kong army camp and asked the soldiers to allow us to go to hospital, but the soldiers were afraid. Then, the villagers asked the commander. They wouldn’t allow us to go in the morning. Then at 5:00 p.m. the commander, Aung Khaing, gave permission for us to go. He was in Ywa Dan Shay. He wrote a letter [*the villagers cannot be admitted to hospital without a letter from SLORC*] that said, “We don’t know who came and shot them”. We stayed the whole day, then at night we went to the hospital. The following morning, Bo Aung Khaing sent another letter that said the Karen came and shot us. We didn’t show them the second letter. We suffered a lot in the hospital. The police came and interrogated us. They asked all the details about what happened. We said we didn’t know who shot us, but that the soldiers called us that night shortly after they released us, and that’s when they shot us. The following morning

the soldiers had said, "Karen soldiers came and shot", but it was SLORC soldiers who were staying in our village. The police asked, "Then why didn't the SLORC soldiers attack the Karen soldiers the next morning?" I said "I don't know". The commander came to the hospital and gave 1,000 Ks for our needs. He said he didn't know the soldiers who had shot us. He told the village headwoman to tell people the Karen soldiers had come and shot us. Later the soldiers punished the village headwoman because they said she hadn't warned them there were Karen soldiers around. She had to give them 5 viss [8 kg.] of chicken.

About 10 days later Bo Aung Khaing came back and gave another 1,000 Ks. I didn't want to accept it, but we needed the money so I took it [*hospital patients in Burma must buy medicines from local black market with their own money, because the military takes all the hospital's medicine and uses it or sells it*]. In the hospital, we heard that the commander Bo Aung Khaing asked the doctor to kill us with medicine. A woman there told me she overheard them talking while she was eating. So every time the doctor came to give us medicine I paid him, because we worried that he would kill us. We gave him whatever he needed, daytime or night-time. Later the doctor said, "We never kill our enemy. If we kill the people in our hospital, then nobody will come to our hospital." Then I felt better. At that time, we were the only two patients — everyone else had left.

The doctor took X-rays, but my daughter could feel and touch the bullet in her leg. The doctor could see it too, but he couldn't tell if it was an AK or G3 bullet [*an AK47 bullet would be fired by Karen troops, whereas a G3 bullet would be from SLORC troops. The women were afraid that when the doctor found a G3 bullet in Naw Paw Htoo, they would be accused of being rebel collaborators. SLORC hospitals often refuse to treat gunshot victims until they sign a declaration claiming that they were shot by Karen soldiers.*] One week after they took X-rays, Naw Paw Htoo had an operation. Her face was covered but she heard the doctor say it was a G3 bullet. After the operation, they uncovered her face and a nurse showed her the bullet. Naw Paw Htoo asked whether it was from AK or G3, but they said she didn't need to know and maybe the doctor would tell her. Then the doctor came again and asked her name, age, and parents' names. He said he had to correct her admission papers. He took another two X-rays of her and one of me. I didn't know if he would send them to SLORC or the village headman.

Naw Paw Htoo: We had nightmares in the hospital. I was unconscious twice, and once my mother was unconscious for the whole day. The doctor said clearly that the bullet in me was a G3 bullet. He said, "It's easy to know whether this bullet came from Karen or Burmese soldiers". After they found the G3 bullet in me, the doctor came and interrogated me. He asked all my personal details and took them to the office. We were in hospital over one month. We left on 3 January 1995. The doctor gave us a card to leave. When we got home, we found out from the villagers that the soldiers were threatening to put us in jail. So we left right away and came to stay in a safer place. I still don't feel well.

Interview: 65-HRV: Detention, Torture, Livelihood, Slavery

Name : Maung Tin Win
 Age: 39
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Mon/Indian
 Occupation: Porter labourer
 Address : Moulmein Town, Mon State
 Interviewed: 28 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

I am from Moulmein. While I was returning home from my job, a military truck suddenly stopped in front of me, and soldiers grabbed and put me on the truck. I saw there were already about 16 people arrested on the truck. We were taken to Kyaik Pa Nei jetty. We slept one night there. I don't remember the date — it was nearly two months ago. I had never been a porter before. Our family always pays all their fees and 'donations'. But this time I never got a chance to contact my family. Later, I found out that SLORC was sending five battalions to attack Maw Kee village, so they needed many porters. That's why the soldiers were arresting everyone in Moulmein, Mudon, Martaban, etc. In Maw Kee, I saw LIBs 104, 118, and 1. LIB 2 was there but they went back. On the way, I had to carry six 81mm mortar shells. I had to carry them too far. I have scars on my back. It's been a long time now, but they're still not better. On the way, our group carried the heaviest ammunition and the soldiers always ordered us to move quickly, so we were very tired. One porter could not walk anymore, so the soldiers beat him on his head and body. It looked like they would beat him to death. His hands were crushed. He was still alive, but they just left him near the path. I saw three other porters like this while we were carrying the supplies and ammunition.

From Ka Neh Lay to Maw Kee we were cut off because of the Karen resistance, and then I saw four porters die without anyone helping them. The dying porters asked for water but we had no water bottles — only the soldiers had them. Some porters bought water from the soldiers. One of the hired porters [*paid by villagers to go in their place*] had malaria when the Karen attacked the soldiers. He was too weak and thirsty, and he could not get up. There were no streams nearby. He asked water from the soldiers, but they ignored him. Then he offered 200 Ks for a bottle of water, and a soldier gave him water and took the money. The porter drank all the water and then he seemed better. I am telling the truth. We were all so thirsty. Later, we found a stream. If we hadn't, I think I would have died of thirst.

Interview: 66-HRV: Detention, Torture, Livelihood, Slavery

Name : Ko Zaw Zaw
 Age: 24

Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Trishaw driver
 Address : Mon State
 Interviewed: 28 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was arrested at about 8:00 a.m. on 10 March [1995] near the railway station and then was sent to Moulmein. There was a steamer, and many porters inside the steamer. We went to Kyon Doe, Kawkareik and Thingan Nyi Naung. At last we reached the army base in the jungle. We had to carry rice baskets and mortars from the base. They were 81 mm mortars — six of them each. It weighed about 20 viss [32 kg]. I saw fighting twice. When there was fighting, they kept us in one place and told us to hide in the bushes. If the front-line soldiers [*advance unit*] asked for more ammo, we were sent to give it to them. It was very hard. They beat us from the back and forced us to go. The hardest job was carrying 25 gallons of water from the stream up the hill [*to the encampment*]. They treated us like animals, not like human beings. They never accepted that we could not do something. We must do everything. Sure they beat us — if we were tired, if we couldn't carry, if we were sick or so on. Every day, at least three or four porters were subject to beatings. Soldiers checked the porters every morning and night. If some porters tried to talk to each other or were late, the soldiers beat the whole group of us. The soldiers were very young but very rude. They had no respect for age at all. They never called the elderly porters "U" [*common respectful form of address to a middle-aged or elder man*].

We were all in one group. The curry was jackfruit, with not enough rice. If we asked for more, they beat us. We got three pieces of boiled jackfruit for each meal. The soldiers ate tinned fish, tinned beef and dried fish. For every meal they had at least beans with rice. We didn't get anything. The porters had to pay five kyats just to get a roll of cheroot from the soldiers. One soldier said we were supposed to get eight kyats per day [*about US\$ 0.07 at market rate*]. But I never saw anybody receive any money from them. I served them nearly two months just for jackfruit. If I'd stayed any longer, I would have died. That's why I ran away from them.

Interview: 67-HRV: Detention, Torture, Livelihood, Slavery

Name : Ko Maung Gyi
 Age: 24
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with two children

Occupation: Day labourer
 Address : Kawkareik Town, Karen State
 Interviewed: 28 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was arrested near the cinema hall. Many people there were arrested by LIB 104. Sixteen porters were arrested with me. It was more than 20 days ago. My family didn't know. I asked permission to tell my family before we went, but they refused. The soldiers said it would just be a few days to carry supplies and cheroots. We slept one night at Thingan Nyi Naung on a truck, then one night at an army base. Then, the porters had to start carrying supplies. I carried biscuits and cheroots. In Maw Kee, we made fences, bunkers and trenches. I didn't know their officers' names. The one in charge, the soldiers just called him "Ga-tone" ["*Baldie*"]. We just got jackfruit and salt to eat. The soldiers got tinned fish, beans and beef. It was worse than living like cows. We had no extra clothes. We slept on the ground, with no blankets. We slept in the rain for four or five days. If we were sick, we were ignored. They beat us many times. Beat and smash. I told the soldier that my leg was in pain, then he smashed me. So I said, "I work for the soldiers but the soldiers beat me. Why?" Then, three soldiers came and they all beat, kicked and punched me. I think they do it because they want everyone to be afraid of them. My leg was stiff. They didn't allow me to rest. My shoulder also hurt from carrying logs. I just wanted to go back home. I am married with two kids. So I ran.

Interview: 68-HRV: Detention, Torture, Livelihood, Slavery

Name : Maung Hla
 Age: 20
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burmese Indian Muslim
 Religion: Islam
 Family: Married with an infant son
 Occupation: Trishaw driver
 Address : Kawkareik Town, Karen State
 Interviewed: 28 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was arrested in Kawkareik 20 days ago. The section LORC leaders [*town ward administration*] and militia arrested me at night because I had a dispute with the section leader. They sent me to IB 97. The following morning, LIB 104 took me to Thingan Nyi Naung. Our group of 11 porters had to carry supplies to Maw Kee. My load was a basket of dried fish. Five porters escaped along the way. At Maw Kee, my duties were cutting down bamboo, making fences, digging the ground, collecting jackfruit and carrying water.

I have been a porter twice. The previous time was last month near the Thai border with the same LIB 104. I ran away and reached a Karen refugee camp — I couldn't remember its name. Two days later the village [*camp*] authorities handed me over to the Thai Police. They took me to Mae Sot and made me cross the [*Moe*] river to Myawaddy. When I got home, I found that my son was sick, so I went to the section leader, explained how I had been a porter and asked for some money to take care of my son. So he collected money from the people in our ward, but then he said that money was not for me. He said, "Now that money has become public property". I got angry and told him that he was silly. That's why he arrested me and sent me as a porter again. Unfortunately, I ended up with LIB 104 again and they remembered me. The soldiers tied me up with a rope and beat me. Then, they warned me not to run away again.

The soldiers scolded and beat us, and the officers said nothing to them about it. The officers said, "You porters are bad and do not obey the rules. That's why the soldiers beat you." Some porters have been hired [*hired by villagers to go in their place*]. They had money so they didn't have to work, they just sat and played cards with the soldiers. We only got jackfruit and one plate of rice to eat, not enough. There were many jackfruit trees in the village. The soldiers said there was no extra food for the porters. If a porter asked for an extra cup of water, the soldiers beat him. They beat for any reason they want. It is no joke! We can die from their beatings. The captains said nothing to the soldiers while they beat us, they just watched.

Now I will go back to Kawkaeik. I know they will arrest me again, but I have no choice. I'll discuss it with my wife and if she agrees we'll move somewhere else.

Interview: 69-HRV: Detention, Torture, Livelihood, Slavery, Forced Labour, Execution

Name : Min Htoo
 Age: 26
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Porter labourer
 Address : Moulmein Town, Mon State
 Interviewed: 28 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was arrested in Moulmein at night on 9 March [1995]. I was arrested by the soldiers from LIB 104. They sent me to Kyaik Pa Nei jetty. We were kept in a steamer for one night. Then to Kyon Doe. We went to Kawkaeik and Thingan Nyi Naung by trucks. Then we walked. We carried supplies like rice and ammunition to Maw Kee. We had two meals per day: one plate of rice and some jackfruits.

There were plenty of jackfruits in the villages. Sometimes the soldiers gave us salt. The soldiers were from LIB 104. They ordered us to dig bunkers and trenches around their camp. My hands were torn open, so one day I told them I could not do it that day. Then a soldier beat me again and again, at least 10 times. I saw porters beaten every day. They beat us every day. The porters who tried to escape were beaten very severely. During a short battle near Ka Neh Lay, supplies were cut off. All the porters got very thirsty and hungry, so some porters asked for water. The soldiers scolded them and beat them so badly that two of them died. One of the men killed was in his 50's, and the other was about 30. Also, four or five porters couldn't walk anymore and were left laying there when we left. I'm telling the truth. I ran away because I couldn't work anymore. They always beat us, and the food was very bad. We ate boiled jackfruits every day with not enough rice. If we were sick, the soldiers didn't allow us to rest. They beat us with sticks. I tell you the truth. Now I don't know how I can get home.

Interview: 70-HRV: Detention, Livelihood, Slavery, Forced Labour, Torture,

Name : Win Hlaing
 Age: 31
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burmese Muslim
 Religion: Islam
 Occupation: Day labourer
 Address : Kawkareik Town, Karen State
 Interviewed: 28 April 1995
 Source: KHRG

Three weeks ago I was arrested at my house by the section [LORC] leaders and militia. They said I had a debt of 600 Ks for porter fees [*protection money which everyone has to pay to SLORC to avoid from being taken as a porter, although many people are taken even after paying*]. Usually we have to pay 35-40 Ks per month for porter fees, but sometimes after 10 days they come and demand it again. Sometimes, they even make us pay again every three or four days. They said it was my duty for the country, so I must go with the soldiers. I said I was afraid, so please excuse me from this. Then the militia arrested me and sent me to the cells at IB 97. I had to carry potatoes, onions, dried fish and cheroots for them. Then, at Maw Kee, I had to make fences and dig trenches. The soldiers always beat us. I was beaten twice. One time I asked for a second cup of water so a soldier kicked me in the chest. The food was only jackfruit, salt and a plate of rice — not enough. I was thin, but I got even thinner at Maw Kee. Jackfruit again and again — every day was jackfruit. They gave us jackfruit to eat, then they beat us. Sometimes, it was very hard to stand up anymore. They used bamboo to beat us. When we left Ka Neh Lay, I saw six porters laying on the ground groaning with bad wounds from beatings.

Some of their hands were broken. [*These are the porters who asked for food when supplies had been cut off — see Min Htoo's testimony at Interview 69.*] If you send me back to Maw Kee, I will die. When I get home now, I will pay my porter fees regularly. Whenever the section leader asks we must pay 40 Ks. Sometimes, he asks several times per month. When we were in Moulmein, sometimes we had to pay four times a month, 150 Ks each time. I don't know where the money goes, but if a person joins the SLORC administration he gets rich. My neighbour is that kind of man. [*At this point Ko Maung Gyi added: "In Kawkareik, Tha Dun is very famous. He was poor before he became a local LORC committee member, but within five years he became a rich man. Now he has retired."*]

SLORC doesn't care about anybody. They think they can run everything. In Kawkareik, when they need porters the militia surrounds the slum area. Then they arrest the poor. They never arrest the rich. The authorities just go to the rich and demand money, about 2,000 Ks. The rich man will never be a porter. But the poor and the jobless like us are always afraid of them.

Interview: 71-HRV: Torture, Livelihood, Children, Women, Slavery, Forced Labour

[*The following testimony was given by a woman who used to be a village headwoman in Kawkareik Township, and is now a refugee in Thailand.*]

Source: KHRG

Village heads are not directly appointed by SLORC but rather are elected by the villagers themselves. They are usually women, because men cannot survive the repeated beatings and punishments by the soldiers [*whereas women are beaten and tortured somewhat less often*]. Therefore, nobody wants to be a village head throughout the whole region. Some villages operate a rotation system for the position, and change the village head as often as every two weeks or every month. As a result, even 17 or 18 year old girls sometimes act as village heads, but they can control the villagers and will be obeyed because everyone knows that they are being instructed and guided by the village elders, usually monastic leaders, and so they never misuse their powers.

The main duty of village heads to SLORC is to give them information on the situation in the village, especially the security situation [*meaning intelligence on KNLA movements*], at a specified SLORC outpost in the area before 7:00 a.m. every day. Usually these bases are on hilltops overlooking the villages. Attendance is compulsory whenever called for and all orders from them must be followed, especially when they order "community service" by the villagers, or money. The level of soldier dealing with the village head is usually a captain, who is also usually the battalion intelligence officer. Typically, he will call the village headwoman "Mother" and himself "Son", even if he is older than her. If he doesn't like the

village head he will treat her badly, but if he likes her he will speak politely and be pleasant — “No need, one action; need, another action” [*this means that how he treats her depends on what he wants, and how harsh he feels he has to be to get it*].

Punishments of village heads vary. Beatings are usually inflicted with 1½ diameter bamboo sticks, especially on the waist, hips and legs, for a minimum of five strokes. If a village head gives “false” information she will be locked in the stocks [*crude mediaeval-style leg stocks of wood or bamboo*]. In one specific situation, the soldiers from IB 230 dug a hole in the graveyard of a village, about the size of a child’s body and seven feet deep, and they placed a set of stocks at the bottom. The captain in charge then warned the village head that if exact information on KNLA activities was not given, she would then spend a minimum of three days at the bottom of the hole, with no protection from sun or rain. He said that on the first day she would receive only water, on the second day a little rice and water, and on the third day, nothing. He said the more serious the digression, the longer the time in the hole, up to six months. I’m not sure whether or not anybody had actually been forced to suffer this. A more common threatened punishment is to force the village head to lie face up in the midday sun for one or two hours. I know of at least one case where this was done. In that case, a regular officer came and let the woman go, then the intelligence officer came back and argued with him for doing so.

As a result of such treatment, if there is a land-mine blast, battle or gunshot in the vicinity of the village the village head is usually too afraid to report it in fear of the consequences. If the SLORC units find out about such an occurrence, they usually send an order demanding that the village head come to their camp immediately. When she gets there, their usual procedure is 1) beat, then 2) abuse and ask questions, then 3) demand money. Scolding and abuse is usually something like, “You are all Karens, therefore you must know about these things but you are liars”. There was one amusing case of an elderly village head who, after SLORC demanded information from him, went directly to the KNLA officer in the area, Lt-Col Johnny, and asked, “Hey, what numbers of men and weapons do you have and what are you up to, because the Burmese are asking me so I need to know.” And Johnny gave him enough information to keep them happy!

Porter fees demanded are like this: for “rich” class, such as people who own a television, 300 Ks per house per month; for “middle” class, such as people who own paddy fields or cattle, 150 Ks per house per month; and for “poor” class, people who are living day to day, 80 Ks per house per month [*she is from a fairly well-off village in the plains; in hill villages, no one would count as “rich” or “middle” class*]. Villages must also provide “rice for porters”. Owners of televisions must also pay an extra tax of about 200 Ks per year to the SLORC office in Kawkareik, plus the local soldiers also demand 150 Ks per month per television, even if it is the oldest, smallest, battery-operated black-and-white version.

Another duty required of the village head is to arrange for villagers to go make and

repair roads, fences, man-traps and barracks for the battalions. Previously, Kawkareik Township was run by IB 230 plus another battalion, and Myawaddy Township by IB 97 plus another battalion, but this is now being changed to accommodate DKBA. SLORC soldiers now are worse than the ones who were under the Ma Sa La [*Burma Socialist Programme Party, Ne Win's pre-1988 dictatorship*]. If an officer is angry, his letter will be typed or written in red ink, and it may have a bullet or charcoal enclosed [*a bullet enclosed with an order means the village head and others will be shot for failure to obey; a piece of charcoal means the village will be burned*]. If a village head fails to obey after an order like this then her village may be shelled. Five years ago, this happened at Ta K'Rah village. Fortunately nobody was hurt.

As for Ko Per Kit, it was established in the rainy season of 1994, maybe June or July, by a Karen Buddhist holy man [*of the group who do not cut their hair and wear a flat-topped conical hat*]. Their base was at Ta K'Rah. They said their aims were to preserve Karen culture, to build many pagodas, and to oppose the SLORC troops by spiritual activities and supernatural powers. The first two aims were stated from the beginning, but the last aim was not clear until the end of 1994. At the time it was still a completely civilian organisation, mostly made up of elderly people but also with some children. Pa Tha Da was active in it from the start. Regarding his character, he was otherwise a generally lazy person who really doesn't like to do physical labour, or so it is said, anyway. Then as the "supernatural powers" part of the organisation became more obvious, members began to wear swords across their shoulders and carry strange bows with very short arrows, only about one foot long. These arrows could only reach 50-100 ft at most, but the leader of the organisation claimed that if one of these arrows was fired at a village or town at the same time that appropriate prayers and ceremonies were observed, then the place would be destroyed. This led most villagers to begin considering him as something of a crackpot.

I was not in the area when the Ko Per Kit joined with Ko Per Baw, so I don't know exactly how it happened. Before, when Ko Per Kit members heard that Ko Per Baw were coming they were afraid and tried to hide like everyone else. Maybe Ko Per Baw forced Ko Per Kit to join them, or maybe Pa Tha Da changed the organisation. I only know that most of the Ko Per Kit members have left and have been replaced by fighters. [*As noted by other witnesses, Ko Per Kit members now carry long samurai-style swords in scabbards, with Buddhist prayer beads wrapped around the hilt. They regularly tell villagers that once they draw their sword they are obliged to kill someone with it.*]

Interview: 72-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Minorities, Judicial, Refugee, Repatriation, Execution, Women

[The woman who gave the following testimony is now a refugee in Thailand.]

Name : Naw Thalay Paw
 Age: 37
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Bee T' Ka village, Kawkareik Town, Karen State
 Interviewed: 7 July 1995
 Source: KHRG

My family and I arrived here five nights ago. We came with another family and spent six nights along the way. If we had come straight the journey would only take one day, but we had to go the long way around so we wouldn't be caught by SLORC soldiers. We are from Bee T' Ka. It is a big village of about 400 or 500 houses. The Christians live on one side of the stream while the Buddhists live on the other. The relations between them are good. Whenever the Christians have a feast they invite the Buddhists, and whenever the Buddhists have a feast they invite the Christians. They are all friends and relatives.

Now there are 40 to 50 SLORC and DKBA troops staying in the village. Most are staying at the monastery, but some are staying on the Christian side too. The SLORC troops are from LIDs 22 and 44, and from IB 28. Bo Aung Win is the SLORC commander in the area [*actually she is mistaken — he is the Intelligence officer of IB 230 which is commanded by Kyaw Myint Taun*]. The SLORC troops seem to be there only temporarily, because they haven't built any bunkers or permanent buildings and they only demand rations for two or three days at a time. Their main base is about an hour to an hour and a half walk away.

When the SLORC soldiers came to my house, my family and I fled. They went in and took all my paddy stored for the whole year. They took all my pots and pans, and our furniture and clothing. When I went back to the village and asked the SLORC troops to give back my food and furniture, they refused. I said, "If you don't give me my things back, I will go to the refugee camp." They said, "If you go there, then in three days we will come after you and make all the refugees come back with us." They robbed many other houses too — especially those whose owners had fled, but some who were at home were also robbed [*for example, the other family who fled to Thailand with hers was robbed while at home*]. They took their clothing, rice, pots and pans, even their bullock carts. I didn't have any money, but those who had money were robbed too. At night, they surrounded people's houses and went in and took everything, even people's necklaces. They did the same to Christians as Buddhists.

People must take turns going to work for SLORC. If one person doesn't go, he has to pay 500 Ks per day. Those who go don't get any pay or food. The village is divided into seven sections, and five men from each section have to go very month to work for SLORC for the whole month. At the end of the month, five new men must go. Also, five more men from the section must work for them for five days at a time, and every five-day a new group of five men must go. In addition, the SLORC troops often order 100 men and women per day to go and work for them. One day, 100 men and women were ordered to go to a place where SLORC troops had stockpiled their rice. Then they were supposed to carry it back to the village. They were told it would only take one and a half or two hours to get there, but it took the whole day. Then when they got there, they found out there was not much to carry, and many people came back carrying only two or three kilos or nothing at all. Then when they arrived back at the village, the SLORC troops said that some of their rice was lost. In reality, no villagers had taken any. They wouldn't dare, because there were armed SLORC soldiers with them the whole way. But the SLORC soldiers forced two people to say they had taken the rice, and then sentenced them like this: they must each pay 150 Ks, and they must stay at home for two months so they can work for the SLORC troops any time the troops need them.

SLORC troops also demand money for their rations or for pigs and chickens. They demand money at least two times a month, but sometimes three or four times. Each time every family must pay 10 Ks or even 100 Ks. SLORC troops also steal chickens at night. The SLORC officer in charge said to report any thefts but the villagers don't dare, because one time when someone did, even more things were then stolen from his house. SLORC and DKBA troops take the rice they have stolen from the villagers and sell it at a nearby rice mill. They get 300 Ks per basket, but they don't give any of that money to the villagers.

Every day, two women have to go to the SLORC commander to report all information about KNLA troops' movements in the area. If a KNLA soldier enters the village, they must report it right away. If they don't, they will be punished. There are some families of KNLA soldiers in the village. In the past these families were not in danger if they stayed in the village, but now it's too dangerous for them to be there.

The village has a Burmese government school, but before there were also two Christian Karens who were supported by the village to teach in a small school at the other end of the village. These teachers taught Karen to the small children. SLORC forced this Karen school to close and ordered all children to attend the Burmese school. They also collected money from the villagers to make a new roof for their school. There is no clinic in the village. The SLORC troops have medics with them but they only take care of their own men, not the villagers.

Now there are 20 DKBA in the village with SLORC. They have a leader who is Karen, Pa Tha Da, but all his orders are given by SLORC. When SLORC troops go out, they have one or two DKBA go with them as guides. They also use DKBA to

call the villagers and demand things from them. There are three DKBA soldiers who are from our village. Pa Tha Da and Nuh Po are brothers, and they are sons of a former KNLA soldier. There's also Buh Duh, who was just a villager. Only Pa Tha Da has a rank — he has been given three stars [Captain]. SLORC changed Pa Tha Da's name to Ko Daw Gyi and Nuh Po's name to Ko Daw Lay. SLORC commander Bo Aung Win is MI [*SLORC Military Intelligence*], and he gives them their orders. I don't know why they joined DKBA. DKBA told the villagers that if we joined them, it would be easy to ask SLORC for our own state. At first the villagers believed them, but later we saw it wasn't true. They said they wouldn't ask for anything from the villagers anymore. In the past, the KNU also asked for porters, food, and young men to join the army. The villagers were tired of it, but now SLORC and DKBA ask for much more. KNU people tried to live together with the villagers, and if one of them did something wrong he would be sent to court. But if SLORC soldiers do something wrong, they are not sent to court.

The monks in the village do not like DKBA. They say DKBA is a religious group, and religious groups should not take up arms. This group does, so it is bad. The abbot, who is over 70 years old, was very disappointed with the DKBA so he called a meeting of the villagers, both Christian and Buddhist, before DKBA came. He told the villagers to beware of DKBA. He said, "They will ask your children to join them." When DKBA came, they did ask the villagers to join, and some did. The abbot was disappointed. DKBA told us they will damage all the Karen refugee camps on the Thai side of the border so that people would be afraid to go there. They said there is no more KNU, that only DKBA exists now. They said that if all the people come back from the refugee camps, the Burmese would give the Karen our own country. The SLORC troops said that if all the KNLA troops join with them, that they will leave the KNLA troops in Kaw Thoo Lei and they will go back to town.

DKBA has to follow SLORC's orders. I don't see any sign that DKBA troops want to help our people. No one in the village wants to support the DKBA, but they have to because they are all afraid. Even the monks don't like the DKBA. The first group of DKBA soldiers who came ordered all the villagers to abandon all their old animist customs. They forbade people from healing ceremonies when we tie strings around people's wrists. The people were afraid and ran away. So SLORC transferred that group out and brought in a new group. The new group doesn't say anything about the animist traditions. In my own village, SLORC killed one DKBA soldier while he was taking a bath in the river. They said they had accidentally mistaken him for a KNLA soldier. On our way out to the border, we heard that SLORC had also killed one DKBA soldier at Bu Dah Klo village and two DKBA soldiers at Naw Dah Kee village. On the way out, our family and the other family slept five nights in villages and one night in the forest. We met one porter on the way. He said he and some other Karens had been forced to carry loads that were extremely heavy. When they couldn't go on, three or four were killed. He managed to run away.

Even though SLORC troops forbid people to go to the refugee camps, I had to go because they had taken my whole year's rice supply, and I couldn't work to support my family because I had to work for SLORC so often already. Five other families left one or two weeks before us. Many people want to leave, but they are afraid of what will happen if they leave. If I went back now and they knew I had been in a refugee camp, they would punish me. I have been here five days already and they haven't come after me, so they were lying when they said they would.

Interview: 73-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Refugee, Women, Torture

[The following couple recently arrived in Thailand as refugees.]

Name :	Saw Htoo Pa	Naw Lwee Paw
Age:	50	43
Sex :	Male	Female
Ethnicity:	Karen	Karen
Religion:	Buddhist	Buddhist
Address :	Kawkareik Township, Karen State	
Interviewed:	20 May 1995	
Source:	KHRG	

We have come from a village of about 100 houses in Kawkareik Township. Last month DKBA and SLORC soldiers from IB 230 came to our village. We can't recall the exact date. The SLORC soldiers stayed outside the village while the DKBA entered and ordered everyone to gather, because they said they would give a speech. They told us that if anybody tried to run then the SLORC soldiers would shoot them. Therefore, all the villagers gathered together.

Four people gave speeches. One was Pa Nwee [*a former KNLA NCO, now prominent among DKBA in the region and ranked as a Lieutenant-Colonel or Colonel*]. Another said he had spent 2 months as a monk and is now a major in DKBA. The third was Thra Pa Doh [*a well-known civilian in the area*]. The last was a monk who was wearing prayer beads around his neck, had a pistol, a walkie-talkie and a wristwatch, and had no knowledge of any Karen language [*there have been many reports of SLORC dressing military officers as monks to control DKBA, particularly in Myaing Gyi Ngu*]. In general, the speeches were to encourage us to join the DKBO. They said if we join we needn't be afraid of SLORC or KNLA soldiers, as DKBA would guard the village. They said families who joined would not have to pay any porter fees or serve as porters. They said that now Karen and Burmese are brothers, and therefore we Karen and Burmese brothers should all join together to fight against the KNU. They said that many villages had already joined them, and that it was now our turn to decide.

In our village everybody is Buddhist, but anyway nobody agreed to join with them. This is because we were afraid of them, because they seemed unreliable and they came with SLORC soldiers. Also, the abbot [*of the monastery*] in our village does not like DKBA. SLORC IB 230 controls the region around our village and they have deceived us for a long time. Because of the things they do, no men will be village head in fear of their beatings, so all the village heads in the area are women. Some villages rotate women as village heads as often as every 15 days.

Not long before the DKBA reached our area, soldiers from IB 230 came to our village at 1:00 a.m. The commander ordered us all to be outside together. He said nothing, but then he began to beat all of the male villagers. After that he carefully examined all of the women. He said they had come to arrest a woman who was the wife of a KNLA soldier, but they must have had false information because there was no such person in our village. So they couldn't find her. Then they grabbed one woman who was in her 30's. The village head vouched for her, and pleaded with them that she has a small baby to take care of. Then the soldiers opened her shirt, squeezed her breasts and sucked her nipples [*presumably this was their warped way of verifying what the village head had said*]. Then they released her.

Generally, the duties of our village are that every house must regularly provide one person to work at the IB 230 compound, cleaning the compound, digging bunkers and trenches for the whole day. We are only allowed to return home at nightfall. We are also ordered to repair the roads around their camp. And if a land mine explodes on a road, then the nearest village will get into big trouble. Once a land mine exploded far from our village, but even so the SLORC soldiers still demanded 50 viss [80 kg.] of pork as compensation. The villages closer to it had to pay money. There has not been any fighting around our village, but now it is too difficult to stay at our village any more, so we came here.

Interview: 74-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Refugee, Women, Torture, Minorities

[*The following three women recently arrived in Thailand as refugees.*]

Name :	Naw Wah Wah	Naw Htoo Htoo	Naw Lah
Age:	45	42	30
Sex :	Female	Female	Female
Ethnicity:	Karen	Karen	Karen
Religion:	Christian	Christian	Christian
Address :	Kawkareik Township, Karen State		
Interviewed:	2 June 1995		
Source:	KHRG		

In the first week of May, the Ko Per Baw came to the area of Bee T' Ka and Ta K'

Rah villages. The SLORC soldiers guarded around the villages for them. Pa Nwee spoke at a public meeting. He said that everything about Ko Per Baw is good and nothing is bad, therefore we should join or else they would burn down our houses, our school and our church! After the meeting, three Ko Per Baw monks went to visit the abbot of Bee T' Ka monastery. They all had guns. Later, two of them left and only one stayed on in the village. They disputed with the abbot, because he said, "This is politics, it doesn't belong to us. Revolutions and religions follow different paths." Then they went away.

Later, very few people joined with Ko Per Baw — only about 40 villagers. So they were angry, and they planned to burn down the church. They went to the monastery [*which has a generator*] and asked for petroleum so they could burn the church. The abbot said, "I will give it to you, and you can burn the church down, and then you can also burn my monastery down. Because we [*Buddhists and Christians*] in this village have lived together for a long time and we live together peacefully, understand each other and drink the same water from the river. To burn down the church and not the monastery would be unfair." But the Ko Per Baw still wanted to do it, so the abbot said, "If you do that, then I will leave here and go to the town to tell everyone about everything you did in our village." Then the Ko Per Baw went away again.

Then Pa Nwee offered a new salary for anyone who would join Ko Per Baw from the village. For one month it was one basket of rice, plus 3,000 Ks, plus no porter duties or fees required of the family, but still the villagers were afraid and untrusting.

Not only is there Ko Per Baw, but also Ko Per Kit in our area. Ko Per Kit usually wear Karen shirts and other traditional clothes and carry swords. Many of them have drums slung across their backs which they beat while walking. They have their own leader whose name is Maung Shwe Kyo, but he is under the command of Pa Nwee, and Ko Per Kit usually stay and work together with Ko Per Baw. Ko Per Kit say they are from Tha M'Nya monastery, but we saw no actual orders or paperwork from there nor any other direct connections. [*Tha M'Nya, near Pa-an, is the largest monastery in Karen State, and the abbot, the Tha M'Nya Sayadaw, is one of the most beloved monks throughout Burma. He is Pa-O but also has a great love for the Karen, and thousands of people have settled in a refuge around his monastery where he feeds them through donations and neither SLORC nor KNU can touch them. Two or Three years ago it appeared that SLORC was trying to corrupt him, initially by inviting him to Rangoon to accept great honours, but he refused.*

He is completely unpolitical. In light of later events, it is possible that SLORC envisaged him as the leader of their planned DKBA' as early as 1993, but when he could not be influenced they found U Thuzana, the current DKBA leader, instead. The refuge initially set up at Myaing Gyi Ngu looked suspiciously like a copy of Tha M'Nya (until the forced labour, military conscription and other abuses began there). By claiming to come from Tha M'Nya, Ko Per Kit/DKBA/ SLORC may be trying to create an impression that they are supported by the Sayadaw there, despite the fact

that he would certainly not lend his support to an armed political group.]

Both groups are generally vegetarians, but we heard that their monks have now granted them eating of two-legged animals and fish four times per month. They say, "two legs are good, four legs are bad" [*this has now become a sick joke among some Karen, meaning that the DKBA likes to kill people but not animals*]. In our village, they arranged for four people to work finding vegetables in the forest for them. We heard that Ko Per Baw soldiers went to a woman's house in Bee T' Ka and asked for her ox and cart so they could carry rice. The woman told them, "My ox is now in the fields, it would be difficult to find", so the Ko Per Baw said, "Now you are not willing to help us." The woman said, "Everything you have asked I have given, but now my ox would be hard to find." The soldiers were not pleased, and they went and told their officer Pa Tha Da. Pa Tha Da was just a civilian in our village, but after Ko Per Baw came he became a Ko Per Kit with one star [*2nd Lieutenant*]. A few days later some SLORC officers visited him, and after they left he suddenly had 3 stars [*Captain*] and became Ko Per Baw. So, Pa Tha Da came to the woman's house, searched it and arrested both her and her two sisters, aged 30 and 29. Altogether there were about six Ko Per Baw. They tied up the eldest sister in front of the house and Pa Tha Da slapped her in the face. The second sister was tied up and poked in the legs with a fishing spear, making her legs bleed. The third sister was tied up on the top of an ant's nest, and the ants bit her all over. Then their brother came, begged for their release and promised to provide an ox and cart, so they were released.

There was also an elderly man there who has some relatives in KNU and some relatives in Ko Per Baw. Despite that, Ko Per Baw soldiers came and abused him and said, "You'd better call back your son who went to the KNU." Then he was afraid, but he is too old to go far. So he left and now he stays somewhere outside the village. Ko Per Baw especially hate families with relatives in the KNU, and they usually tell them to call their relatives back and threaten to arrest other family members and hold them as hostages if they don't come. KNU village leader fled but left his family behind. They arrested his 35-year-old wife and told her she'd be released if he returned, but he didn't and so she was sent along with her four children to Myaing Gyi Ngu. There used to be two schools in Bee T' Ka, a primary school run by SLORC and a middle school by KNU. Ko Per Baw closed KNU school, the headmaster had to flee to Thailand and the teachers also fled to other places.

About 100 SLORC soldiers from IB 230 are usually stationed around our village. Because of this and all the other problems and events that have occurred, we were too afraid to live there any longer, so we planned to flee together. We started on 20 May, along with a young novice monk in his robes [*for protection*] and his father. We passed through many Ko Per Baw checkpoints along the way and said we were going to buy food supplies at Meh Bleh. We kept going all the way to KNU 6th Brigade area [*KNU-held territory far to the south*] before we crossed into Thailand, so to reach here it took us 13 days altogether, and we don't intend to go back.

Interview: 75-HRV: Livelihood, Refugee, Women, Torture, Execution, Displacement

[The following woman is now a refugee in Thailand.]

Name : Naw Paw Thu
 Age: 45
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Address : Bee T'Ka village, Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 3 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

On 2 May, two soldiers from SLORC IB 230 at Naw Bo camp [*called Naung Bo Dike Kyi by the Burmese*], came to a village near our village in order to defect. They were taken through our village to another, where they met with a KNU officer and defected. In the afternoon on 3 May, IB 230 commander Kyaw Myint Taun came from Naw Bo to Bee T' Ka village and asked questions about the missing soldiers. After that Aung Win, the Military Intelligence officer at Naw Bo, gave an order that Bee T' Ka village must pay 150,000 Ks as compensation for the lost soldiers.

That same day soldiers from IB 230 who were patrolling east of the village stopped Saw Ket Doh and interrogated him. Saw Ket Doh was a little drunk, as he was returning from a wedding ceremony. The soldiers asked if he had seen any KNLA soldiers and he told them he had not. But not long after, KNLA soldiers ambushed another SLORC unit [*actually it was a DKBA unit which was ambushed*]. So the SLORC soldiers returned to Bee T' Ka and arrested Saw Ket Doh. They accused him of helping the KNLA. They took him to Naw Bo camp, and there they beat him and cut his throat. They also arrested one villager from Naw Bo village and one from Baw T'Raw Kaw village, accused them of helping the two defectors and executed them.

At about 6:00 a.m. on 7 May, there was fighting between Ko Per Baw and KNLA soldiers. Later that day, a group of Ko Per Baw went to Tee Wah May Kee and executed a KNU administrative officer there. Then they went to Naw Ter Kee, but the villagers were afraid and fled. On 8 May, Ko Per Baw arrived at Bee T' Ka village. Then Pa Tha Da met with Pa Nwee and they signed a paper and drank promissory liquid' together [*to seal a vow; this is often water with a bullet or piece of a bayonet in it, the idea being that if the promise is broken, the weapon will come to kill you*]. Then Pa Tha Da went to the monastery and asked the abbot, for permission to burn down the church. The abbot said, "After you burn the church, come and burn the monastery — and if you don't then I will burn it down myself, because we have lived together here for a long time and we drink the same water from the river. When the Christians have a festival we help them, and when we have a festival they help us"

After this Pa Tha Da lowered his head and went away. Later in the day, he went back and asked again, but the abbot told him the same as before so he went away again. On 10 May, Pa Tha Da went to Naw Mu Mu's house. She is over 70 years old. He accused her of helping the KNU in such ways as letting them stay and store materials in her house. He took all her rice supply and ordered her to come to Ko Per Baw in Bee T' Ka once a month in order to receive one large tin of rice [*a little less than enough for one person*]. At about the same time, Ko Per Baw were confiscating things like bullock carts, goats, pigs, and chickens from KNU families, but some of them who lost things were not KNU families. [*By KNU families, she means the families and relatives of KNU members. Other witnesses claim that when the vegetarian DKBA members are asked why they are stealing livestock, they reply that they will give it to SLORC soldiers.*]

Ko Per Baw waited until Sunday, 14 May, to hold their public meeting in the village. When Pa Nwee spoke, he said that there is a need for all Karens to stay united and that there will be freedom of religion. Pa Tha Da spoke and said KNU families are the same as KNU members, and therefore they must all be arrested and killed. After hearing this, most KNU families were in fear for their lives and fled the village.

Interview: 76-HRV: Slavery, Livelihood, Refugee, Women, Torture, Execution, Displacement

[*The following woman is now a refugee in Thailand.*]

Name : Naw Muh Ghay
 Age: 33
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Address : Bee T'Ka village, Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 6 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

Now the Burmese are demanding porters. Every house must send one person and when we go, we aren't allowed to come back. I was staying at my parents' place. When the demand came for people to go, I had to go for our house. It was after the water festival [*which is in April; these events happened in early May, after two SLORC soldiers deserted*]. Everybody in Bee T' Ka was called together because the Burmese said that the villagers had erred. Some people in Naw Bo and Saw Kat Kyo told them that Bee T' Ka villagers had guided two of their soldiers [*deserters*] through the village, but I didn't know anything about this. Then the Burmese demanded that one person from every house must go to their camp. So one person from every house went, because otherwise their house would be burnt down. [*From subsequent details of her story, it appears that only one part of the village was*

involved; *Bee T' Ka is a very large, spread-out village, so this is expectable.*] When we went there we saw one headwoman who was being punished severely by the Burmese — they were pushing a bayonet against her temple. But they didn't put us together with her.

It was LIB 230. There was an NCO who beat me. Other people told me he had three stripes [*sergeant; others also claim he is with Intelligence*]. When he beat me I cried and became afraid, so I started to shake. He could speak Pwo and Sgaw Karen languages. He told us, "You must tell the truth! You are families of Karen soldiers!" When they question us like this we answer with only one word, "Yes", because if we answer otherwise or give different answers, they'll ask many more questions and we'll have much more trouble. He asked, "Who guided the two men?", and we replied, "We don't know, we didn't see", and he said, "You are liars! What you tell me isn't true! You are Karen soldiers' families!" Some of the women replied, "I have a family but my husband is not a Karen soldier". Neither is my husband, but I couldn't say this because my husband doesn't stay near here, so if I said that and they told me to call him and I couldn't, then they would say he is a soldier and I might be killed.

I didn't remember how many times they beat me, but until I was blue in many places. They used a heavy length of bamboo [*she named "wa klu", the thickest variety there is*], and both ends of it were sharpened. For me they used just one section [*probably about two feet long*], but longer pieces for some people. I said, "Please, we are not Karen soldiers' families, if we were we would never have come here, we are all just normal villagers". Then a new soldier who could speak Karen came and said to us, "People have told us things already, you don't need to lie to us. We already know who guided the two soldiers and where they went and we know their village." [*a basic SLORC interrogation tactic, get people to talk by telling them you already know anyway.*] Before they asked more questions they beat us first, then I cried. Because of crying they beat us again so that we went along with whatever he said, agreeing with everything and saying, "We know the people who guided them, they went to Noh Law Bler, and the Karen soldiers are staying there and if you go there they'll attack you". They believed that, but even so we didn't get any food and then they made us sitting in the sun. Then they told us that we were going to be taken back to our village because they had no food to give us there. Before we left, one person was taken aside and again beaten severely by the soldiers, and they tied the men together in pairs. Then they marched us to Taw Tharee Bu, only a few minutes away, and in that place we saw a pit which had written above it, 'Anybody who makes a mistake will be put in here', and then we were very afraid. Then we saw some soldiers boiling water in a very big pot, and they showed it to us and threatened us that any person who made a mistake would be put in the pot with the water! Oh — boiling water!! Then we were very afraid and we prayed for ourselves, all depending on our different religions, and we cried. The soldiers said, "Anybody would die" and we agreed and said together that surely nobody could hope to live through that. We didn't see any other villagers in that place, only soldiers.

In the afternoon we set out for Bee T' Ka . We had to carry the soldiers' rucksacks but we hadn't eaten any food, so we were very tired because they were very heavy. All the way from this place near Naw Bo the soldiers ordered us to run, always run, not walk, until we reached Bee T' Ka, and it took about two hours by running. I saw one woman who had a mouth ulcer, and after we started our journey, it broke and fluid was running out of her mouth and she was crying. They called to us and we had to hurry as much as possible, even if there were many bushes and obstacles, even if we didn't have slippers on our feet. Really, this wasn't a pleasant scene for us, because all we could see was people getting beaten, and we felt terrible inside. The headwoman [*who had been badly tortured*] couldn't walk, and two people at a time took turns carrying her. We'd had no food, and we'd all been beaten. We took a rest at Tee Wah Ker, and we thought we would die! We reached K'Ner Ko, and when a soldier asked me, "What village is this?" I replied, " Bee T' Ka ", because I was so tired. But they ordered us to continue pass it. I was so tired, and I decided, "No, I don't want to go. If I die now, that's all right." The pack was so heavy, and we couldn't put the packs down or take a rest even for a few minutes. Then when we reached the outskirts of Bee T' Ka they wouldn't let us drink any water even though we were very thirsty, and even then we had to keep running because there are Karen soldiers around Bee T' Ka, and we told the Burmese, "Don't go! If you go they will shoot at you, and if you make us walk before you then we will die!" Then nobody went into the centre of the village — instead they called us together again. We saw only women and children from the village there, but the soldiers called for everyone to join together with us, whether women or children [*possibly as a human shield*], and the people begged them, "Don't shoot, we are only villagers", and they didn't shoot. Then we came to a place in the village where there was a wedding on that day, where there was a lot of pork and other foods, and suddenly it was all full with Burmese soldiers! Some food was given to us too [*by the hosts, not the soldiers*], but because of the beatings my sides were sore and I could hardly eat any.

After that we arrived at the monastery and I found I couldn't move easily because it was so painful. They ordered us to stay together at the monastery. We all thought we would be allowed to eat there, but they still did not let us eat. Only at 10:00 p.m., they let us eat, and then only because the abbot demanded that the soldiers let us eat. Even though we'd had a rest by then, we could not eat rice easily. We only took a very small amount at a time. We hadn't eaten for one day and one night. And then after eating the feeling was unpleasant, and they still did not allow us to go anywhere — they said to us, "You cannot go back — if you try to go free you must die". For no reason! No trial or anything! Then two village elders came and we begged them, "Please help us, or we will die now". They told us, "We know the soldiers have beaten you and we have been trying to find out your situation, so we have come to you and we know that the soldiers can't kill you now." They brought with them mothers and fathers of people in our group, to encourage and strengthen them. We heard we were all still in trouble because the Burmese had demanded 150,000 Ks, and they begged the soldiers that this was too much because we had already suffered very hard punishment for this. Since they had forced us to go where we didn't want

to go and had beaten us, they then reduced the amount by 10,000, to 140,000 Ks. Then all of the village leaders had to sign agreement to pay this. They demanded the money because their [two] soldiers joined the Karen with two guns and ammunition. After the leaders signed, we were all released and we could return to our homes. When we started to go the soldiers yelled at us "Go! Quickly!" So we went quickly, and then after we got to our homes we couldn't do anything, because of pain. I was still very afraid, I couldn't think clearly and I couldn't sleep.

A man from Baw T'Raw Kaw was also called to go with us, together with his wife and children. He was beaten very much by the Burmese soldiers. They accused him of guiding the two soldiers, and they were sure about him. They wouldn't let his children take their mother's milk so they cried a lot, and the other women there tried to get the children to take milk from them but they didn't want to and they cried. Their mother was there, but when she tried to give them milk the Burmese soldiers beat her very badly and her body became swollen. Then they left her together with us. Her husband was also beaten very badly, and after we got back to the village they burnt him with fire and did so many things to him. When I saw it, I couldn't even think anymore. I stayed alone and didn't talk to anybody. In the end, he was dead. Dead for no reason. His name was Boh Nee [*named as either Pati Po Mah or Manein Kyi Bah in the testimony of Naw Thay Wah — Karen and Burmese often have more than one name*].

Then [*a few days later*] Ko Per Baw came, and people said, "We'll go and see them together", but I said, "No, I don't want to go" because I was afraid and I didn't dare. Whenever people said the Burmese were coming we all ran together, even without our pillows. Now we stay here [*Thailand*] we never want to go back to our place and face all these problems and dangers. My parents are still there, because Ko Per Baw are not as strict for us [*as SLORC*], because their leader is Pa Nwee and he knew us before. Ko Per Baw said, "Don't be afraid, if you live in unity with us you don't have to worry about giving things to the Burmese", and they said, "When the Burmese came and beat you we were not here", but some people said, "When they beat us you didn't want to be here". Anyway, after they stayed in the village the situation got a little better, but there is still fighting between Burmese and Karen soldiers. [*Her friend then described how some Karen soldiers had shot at the DKBA's Pa Tha Da and his brother in the village during the fighting, and how afterwards Pa Tha Da blamed the villagers for this.*] Then Pa Tha Da and his brother said, "If nobody had been in the village, they could not have shot at us" [*meaning to imply that the villagers are supporting the KNLA*], and we said, "We can't tell them not to shoot at you, because they're your enemies. So they came and shot at you, and they'll do that wherever and whenever they see you." This made them angry again, and they said, "We will kill you until none is left!"

On our way here [*to Thailand*] we saw Nuh Po. He was wearing a striped headband [*he is Pa Tha Da's brother, and is with either Ko Per Baw or Ko Per Kif*], and he asked us, "Did you come from Bee T' Ka? Have any Christians come with you?"

We said we'd come from Bee T' Ka but there were no Christians among us, and he said "If any Christians come we will kill them all!" At the time he asked us we were sitting together with a monk under a tree, so he assumed we were Buddhist! [*They laughed*] He said, "If I go to Bee T' Ka I will do something terrible there!" His brother stays in Bee T' Ka already, and they know the Christian leaders' houses and families because they have stayed there and they used to help the Karen soldiers before. So they know all the secret weapons caches and can find everybody and everything. They know the Karen soldiers' families, so those families are living in fear and without safety. Many troubles! At night as they move around outside the Karen soldiers' houses and threaten their families, the soldiers' families have trouble, can't stay or sleep at their homes and then have to flee. Also, Ko Per Baw has told the Burmese soldiers to take things from houses, like rice, pigs or chickens, but they say, "Only if it is the house of your enemy [*KNLA*]". Everyday Ko Per Baw take rice for themselves from houses. They found some bullock carts, ordered the owners to give them and then went to take rice from Karen soldiers' families. One woman whose rice was taken away is Htun Kyi's wife, whom I know. I didn't even know Htun Kyi was a soldier, but they already knew all about it. So we were all afraid, we couldn't stay and we came here.

The Burmese soldiers always leave villages before Ko Per Baw come and then come back again afterwards so that it will look like they are not together, but I think they are doing things together. The Burmese soldiers go first, they are not polite and they are the first to be shot at by the Karen soldiers. Ko Per Baw always say, "We will do good things and live in unity and peace." Yes, they say like that, but we don't know what might happen. I never went to their place because I was especially afraid of their beatings. As for the Burmese, whenever people said they were coming I always ran away, because they beat us very much before they even asked us anything. Then when they asked, we couldn't say anything because we were afraid and shaking and we don't understand Burmese language very well. One of the men from the village was walking on the road with a bottle of pig fat because he was coming back from his cousin's wedding ceremony, and when he met Burmese soldiers they asked him, "Did you see any Karen soldiers?" He said, "No", but after they had passed him the Karen soldiers attacked them. He hadn't seen the Karen soldiers waiting for the Burmese. But then the Burmese accused him of working for the Karen soldiers, and they killed him. They beat him to death. Another one, dead for no reason. His name was Nyo Sein [*mentioned as Saw Ket Doh in other testimonies. He was killed on 3 May*].

We came here bit by bit. We saw people from Kyaw Ko going to buy rice mills, so we asked them to please tell any other people along the way that we were also from Kyaw Ko. Then if we met soldiers we told them, "We are from Kyaw Ko, going to buy rice mills. Please let us go to get things for our farms. Please don't give us trouble." We lied like that to the Burmese soldiers along our journey! We could not tell them we were coming here, or they would never have let us come. I came with my family, including my four-month-old child, and four other people. [*Her friend*

who came with her added: "We came here and we can't go back, because if we try to go back we have no documents, and if we get back people will tell the Burmese. So we cannot go back, even though we really don't know any Karen leaders."]

Interview: 77-HRV: Slavery, Livelihood, Refugee, Torture, Child

[The following man is now a refugee in Thailand.]

Name : Saw Tee Ku
 Age: 21
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 2 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was travelling to Pah Klu along with my friend. Starting on 6 May, I was staying in K—. Five people, three middle-aged women and two men, arrived from Bee T' Ka village and I went to talk with them to get news. They said that Ko Per Baw were in their village, and although Ko Per Baw had encouraged them to stay they had all got passes from Ko Per Baw to go and visit their family at K—. The passes cost 10 Ks each and bore a Ko Per Baw stamp. In spite of this, when they met SLORC soldiers from LID 22 on the road leading out of their village, the soldiers beat them with sticks on the legs, back and shoulders. They had bruises. This SLORC unit is usually called "M'may thon kyeh" because they always beat people they meet, even if they don't have any questions to ask [*"M'may thon kyeh, may thon kyeh" is a Burmese proverb, meaning "Ask nothing, three blows; ask, three blows", usually used to describe general conditions of life in Burma*].

They described to me the current situation at Bee T' Ka. Ko Per Baw have ordered the people there not to drink alcohol and to become vegetarians. They told the villagers to surrender their hunting rifles and fishing nets, and warned that if they searched houses and found these things then people would be in trouble. They said KNU members must surrender their walkie-talkies, but only four walkie-talkies were surrendered. They also said the villagers should always wear traditional Karen clothes, and although this was not an order some Ko Per Baw told villagers that they planned to punish people later who did not obey this. Most of these rules were made at the beginning when Ko Per Baw arrived in Bee T' Ka and made speeches to all the villagers. They also gave out pieces of paper detailing the rules. The villagers especially remembered what Bo Kyaw said in his speech. He said that the villagers must not try to run away, especially to Thailand, because DKBA is in control everywhere and to attempt to escape is useless. He said that their plan is very good, that they will close up all the border areas and open big resettlement camps for the

refugees to return to Burma. He said they would arrest all KNLA officers and demanded that the villagers point out their houses and property. Later some people had their possessions confiscated, including paddy fields, cattle and other livestock. Eight pairs of cattle which were being kept under the church were taken, and the DKBA sold them for 5,000 Ks per head.

The villagers said that about 14 Ko Per Baw came to Bee T' Ka, and although there is a SLORC base nearby the SLORC soldiers just hung around the edge of the village and kept a low profile. Pa Nwee is Ko Per Baw commander, Bee T' Ka is to be their headquarters, and their unit is called No. 333. Bo Kyaw's unit is to be based at Kyaw Ko and is called No. 999. At the time, Ko Per Baw hadn't made a separate camp yet, they were staying in the villagers' houses.

On 19 May, I stayed at Ker Ghaw, and the following day SLORC soldiers came to the village. I was in my uncle's house. I didn't see them because they entered the village from the other end, but I saw people running so I jumped down and ran too. As I ran out of the village, I saw the SLORC soldiers entering from the other end. I crossed the Meh Bleh River and climbed up to the top of a hill on the other side. At the top there were about 50 or 60 other young men like me. We could see back to Ker Ghaw. We watched while the SLORC soldiers waited for about an hour and then moved off to Taw Oh. We stayed on the hill for about an hour until a woman came with a message from the villagers that it was all right to return. When I got back the villagers said about 1,000 SLORC soldiers who came from IBs 356 and 357 of LID 44 took 45 people from the village as porters. The headman said to them, "If you want porters, tell me and I will arrange it, but don't just grab people", but they didn't listen to him. All of the people taken were male, but some were elderly and others very young. I know some 14-year-old boys who were carrying rice along the roadside when they were taken. After this, the headman had to spend all day arranging for food, alcohol and other things to be taken to the soldiers at Taw Oh, and he spent all day going backwards and forwards between Taw Oh and Ker Ghaw.

Because of these events I was afraid of the Burmese soldiers and wanted to come back to Thailand, but the villagers advised me to wait because there were many SLORC soldiers on the move so it was not a good time for travel. In the morning on 29 May, the headman received a written order from SLORC at Taw Oh to send four carts and oxen. Taw Oh has many small sawmills, and the SLORC soldiers had demanded 2,000 Ks per engine [*small engines used to run the saws*] from the owners. Four machines had not been paid, so SLORC had confiscated them and now wanted the carts to transport them for resale.

Interview: 78-HRV: Religion, Slavery, Livelihood, Forced Labour, Refugee, Children

[The following man recently arrived in Thailand as a refugee.]

Name : Saw Thaw Thi Wah
 Age: 42
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 31 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

In April [1995], about 140 soldiers of DKBA, along with SLORC soldiers, came to my village in Kawkareik Township. We didn't see the SLORC soldiers because they stayed outside the village, so I don't know what unit they were from. DKBA ordered villagers to go and gather people from the small clusters of houses throughout the village and bring them together. When we were all together they made speeches. I recalled that there were five people on the platform: Pa Nwee, Bwa Thay, a civilian and two monks, both of whom were armed. Pa Nwee talked about why DKBA was started — because the KNU oppressed Buddhists. He said the KNU didn't allow Buddhists to paint pagodas with lime or allow monasteries to use galvanised metal roofing, and so on [*note: the KNU never actually did these things*]. One of the monks also gave a speech in Karen language, but the other said nothing. The speeches encouraged us to join DKBA. They said a married person in DKBA could get 1,000 Ks per month and a single male or female soldiers could get 500 Ks. In order to join we would have to eat only vegetables and we should move to Myaing Gyi Ngu, where they said they had plenty of rice and we would be treated well. They said that the village would no longer have to send porters, do other labour or pay fees. But in reality this is not true, because not long after that the SLORC soldiers demanded 200 porters. Most of the single young men in our village have gone to find work in Thailand and nobody else wanted to go as porters, so the village head collected money and paid to hire some 'professional' porters from Kyon Doe to go in our place. First each household gave 40 Ks, but then this was not enough so there had to be two more collections of money. There are about 300 households in our village.

There had also been two other calls for labour we had to obey. The first was twice in April and twice in May, when IB 230 called for 50 people to go and work at their camp, repairing buildings and roads and gardening. The duty lasted five to seven days, and in that time the people had to stay in a place near the camp. For each person who was not able to go, the village had to pay 100 K per day to IB 230. The other thing is that every village in Kawkareik Township must send 50 people to work on the reconstruction of Mya Pa Dine-Na Bu road. I had to do my round of duty there last month. Many people throughout the township were staying there

along the roadside, and we had to bring our own food and other necessities.

In their speeches, DKBA never demanded that we help them, but they did ask that we assist voluntarily to carry their things to the other villages, where we would be free to go. But they did have some permanent porters with them, people they had arrested while trying to cross the border out of Burma without their authorisation. DKBA seemed to be well armed. Out of 140 soldiers, 40 had RPGs [*rocket-propelled grenades — this was determined by drawing and description of the weapon by the interviewee*] with spare rounds on their backs, and maybe 50 had M79's [*also deduced from his description and drawing*]. Most of the soldiers were young, the youngest being 13-14, but some were aged about 40. Despite this, they seemed disciplined. They brought their food with them, including beans and Burmese-brand condensed milk, chillies and vegetables [*Burma Army rations other than the vegetables*]. They cooked curries themselves, and before going to sleep they meditated in the villagers' houses [*they billeted themselves in the houses of the village — the meditation is probably ordered by their leaders, as the DKBA rank and file are very uneducated*]. I have heard that around Pa-an SLORC has now withdrawn the regional militias, such as the People's Army militia [*SLORC forms most militias by conscripting villagers, arming them and then taking them along to force them to fight the KNLA when extra numbers are needed*], and replaced them with the DKBA.

Interview: 79-HRV: Religion, Livelihood, Refugee, Torture,

[*The following woman is the wife of a KNLA officer and is now a refugee in Thailand.*]

Name :	Naw K'Paw Muh
Age:	35
Sex :	Female
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Christian
Address :	Bee T' Ka village, Kawkareik Township, Karen State
Interviewed:	3 June 1995
Source:	KHRG

In the evening on 7 May, Ko Per Baw entered the village, and when I heard this I left during the night. Later that night, a villager came and told me that Ko Per Baw were asking and looking around the village for me and that I shouldn't stay, so I changed the places again. Later, they said Ko Per Baw had called a meeting and said that they wanted to find all Kaw Thoo Lei [*GNU*] members and their families, and if they found them they would kill them all. So I was afraid to stay.

Ko Per Baw went to the house of Saw Ku Taw Mo [*a form of address meaning "Saw Tu Kaw's mother" — her actual name is Naw Mu Mu, as noted in other testimonies*], who is not a Kaw Thoo Lei wife. Pa Tha Da was their leader. He

accused her of sharing her rice with Kaw Thoo Lei and letting them store things in her house. When they searched they didn't find anything, but anyway they said to her, "Your son works for Kaw Thoo Lei". They told her she must go and bring him back and then they abused her and said that for this reason they would take her possessions. Then they took all her rice supply and ripped the gold necklace off her daughter. They tied up her eldest daughter, Naw Kuh Po, who has a baby, and they took her to the monastery but left her baby at her house. They kept her at the monastery for one night, and then her mother and another woman went to talk to them. They said, "She is just a villager, why do you keep her?", and Ko Per Baw said "You must find your son, otherwise we must kill another member of your family instead." After that I heard that the abbot of the monastery spoke with them and she was released, but I'm not sure because I moved at about that time.

The same night that they came looking for me, Ko Per Baw together with SLORC caught Saw Kaw Muh [*the son of a local KNU civilian administrative official*]. They tied him up and beat him and didn't release him [*Saw Kaw Muh was held until late June when he escaped and fled to Thailand*]. Many villagers were captured like this. Other villagers who were afraid ran away, and Ko Per Baw also confiscated the village's rice supplies. Pa Tha Da was in charge. They searched many houses. They took a villager's video player and generator [*his means of income was operating a video cinema in the village*] and they told him, "Whenever we want to watch a video, you must bring the video cassettes and petrol and play the video for us" [*they probably don't know how to operate the machine*]. At that time his wife had just had a new born baby and it was only a few days old, but still he had to go and serve them like this. They also threatened to burn down his house because they said he was using Kaw Thoo Lei money, but he denied this and told them all he had got was his traditional wedding present from his father-in-law.

Along our way to Thailand, every time we heard that SLORC were coming we ran into the bushes. At night, we slept in the bushes covered with plastic sheets. There were lots of rainstorms and mosquito and leeches, and my son cried to me, "Mother, I don't want to sleep here, let's go back. Go back now", and he asked to drink my breast milk, but I was dry for a long time and I couldn't do anything for him because we were in the jungle at night.

Interview: 80-HRV: Religion, Livelihood, Refugee, Torture, Execution

[*The following woman is the wife of a KNLA officer and is now a refugee in Thailand.*]

Name : Naw Thay Wah
 Age: 27
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian

Address : Bee T' Ka village, Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 2 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

Ko Per Baw wanted to burn down the Church in Bee T' Ka because they want all people to become Buddhists. Pa Tha Da went, but the monk said, "Before you burn down the church I offer you the opportunity to also burn down the monastery". He is the abbot at Bee T' Ka monastery. He said, "You should burn down the monastery first and then the church, because in the past we never argued with each other, we have lived together peacefully. When they have a festival we help them and when we have a festival they help us, so if you burn down the church you will break my heart. You must treat all churches and monasteries equally." Then Pa Tha Da lowered his head and went away.

He went to Naw Kuh Po's house, tied her up and said he would burn down her house. He tied her up around the neck and the waist. They killed three people in Bee T' Ka: Saw Ket Doh, Pati Po Mah, and Manein Kyi Bah. They were all just workers. They did it because the Karen [KNLA] soldiers shot at Ko Per Baw. One of the men [Saw Ket Doh] was stopped coming back from a wedding, on the road near Bee T' Ka. They asked him if he knew anything about Karen soldiers, but he said he didn't see anything. After they left him, the Karen soldiers shot at them in the east of the village. The Burmese came for Saw Ket Doh, not Ko Per Baw. Then when Ko Per Baw met with the Burmese, they told the Burmese to execute all three people. Later I talked to two Karen soldiers, and they said they had ambushed the Ko Per Baw because the Burmese had attacked them while they were eating. Another person they arrested was Naw Muh Pee, and she was beaten. Before she was released, she was bleating like a goat! They also beat Naw Htoo. She was beaten so badly that she had to be carried by Kalah Ma Nyein, who had also been beaten.

I know about the two defectors [*the two SLORC deserters from IB 230 who came through their village, also mentioned in the testimony of Naw Paw Thu*]. Their officer had cut off the tips of their pinky fingers [*the officer had reportedly done this earlier that day as a means of "permanent identification" of his troops*]. I know because the officer came and called a village meeting and told us this. He was very angry at the Bee T' Ka villagers for helping the deserters. He demanded that the village pay 150,000 Ks as compensation for them.

I came here because my aunt told me not to stay there. She said Ko Per Baw were looking for me, and she said, "Don't be discovered — if they see you they will order you to find your husband within three days, and if you can't then they will beat you instead of him, and maybe they will kill you instead of your husband."

Interview: 81-HRV: Religion, Livelihood, Refugee, Torture, Slavery, Movement

[The following testimony is from a Karen soldier from Kawkareik Township.]

Name : Saw Thay Po
 Age: 24
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Address : Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 5 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

Ko Per Baw call the people who don't join with them "Ta Bee Met" [*literally, "closed eyes"*]. Their idea is to be against the "Ta Bee Met". They always call Christians this — not rebels or Kaw Thoo Lei, just Ta Bee Met. They say that if they see Christians they will "break them apart". At first [*when DKBA was formed*] we heard that Christians had killed Buddhists, but that was not true. None of those things had happened in the places they said. Really, this is just action by the Burmese in order to cause conflict among Karens, so that we will fight each other. Even though we are not leaders, we all have feelings and sympathies about this.

At their meeting in Noh Baw Heh, Ko Per Baw said, "We must have unity". But after that they demanded some porters for two or three days at a time. I heard that at Bee T' Ka some people were tortured. Ko Per Baw salaries are 1,000 Ks for married people and 500 Ks for single, but I heard that at Ta M'ha they demanded money for wages from the villagers. My brother was there at the time. Now, if people in Noh Baw Heh want to go outside the village to plant paddy and such, they must ask Benyah Tha Nee [*a Karen who was a monk several years ago and is now with either Ko Per Baw, Ko Per Kit or Ko Per Wah*] for permission. He gives them a written pass, and they cannot stay out after dark. Before, many people slept in their huts in the fields and they could do a lot of work that way [*this is also essential when the harvest time is drawing near to protect the crops from animals*], but now they cannot do that. Everybody is especially afraid of SLORC IB 81, which they call "M'may thon kye" [*"M'may thon kye, may thon kye" is a Burmese proverb, meaning "Ask nothing, three blows; ask, three blows", usually used to describe general conditions of life in Burma*], even though there is no fighting right now. Before, when the soldiers from IB 81 stayed in the village for a few days they said that if they saw anyone breaking the rules or fleeing from them then they could treat them as the enemy, and execute them or do as they like to them.

Interview: 82-HRV: Livelihood, Refugee, Slavery, Movement

[The following has been summarised from an interview with a Karen man who returned from Myawaddy area in May 1995]

Source: KHRG

I started travelling Pah Klu on 2 May. I went through a trading gate just north of Myawaddy and paid 250 Ks to the SLORC soldiers there from LID 44. Then I walked to Htee Sa Rah and on to Pah Klu, where I stayed for about two weeks. There the news was that DKBA were in Bee T' Ka village, where they were making a district headquarters and are constructing a camp. This is because SLORC has given DKBA legal and administrative authority in this region, although SLORC still seems to be collecting all the money like before. The news was that after they are finished in Bee T' Ka, DKBA will come further across the hills and make another new district named Meh Bleh Toh on this side [*eastern side of the hills*], possibly with a camp at Ker Ghaw. Because of this, the people in Pah Klu were very worried. They are very afraid of DKBA, even though of the 50 or so houses in the village about 45 are Buddhist. We heard that DKBA hates district or township officers who were appointed by KNU most of all, and will kill them if they catch them.

On three occasions in the time I was there, when we heard the news that DKBA soldiers were coming, we all, except the elderly women, ran into the forest. Especially on 13 May, everybody thought they were coming for sure and we hid in the forest until nightfall. I became afraid that the first thing DKBA would do would be to block the route to Thailand, so on 18 May I started coming to Thailand. On 19 May, I stayed at Ker Ghaw, and the people there said DKBA were only five hours [*walk*] from their village. They had heard that there had been a fight between DKBA and SLORC in which one DKBA medic had been killed, but they didn't know any other details. They had also heard that about 200 porters had just been taken in Myawaddy, but they weren't sure where they had been sent.

Interview: 83-HRV: Livelihood, Displacement, Slavery, Women, Child

[The following interview was conducted with villagers from Thay Ko Der village on 26 May 1995, after the village had been burned down along with Lay Wah village by SLORC troops from IB 76, and they were preparing to flee. Puh, Saw, or Pa prefixes men's names, Pi or Naw prefixes women's names.]:

Source: KHRG

Puh Tah Muh: Twelve houses were burnt down [*out of 15*], and four rice barns as well. Not all of the paddy was burnt. Pi Wah's house and rice barn were burnt down. She is an elderly woman.

Pi Wah: There is nothing left for me to eat. It's all gone. I have a small paddy field,

but there's nothing left for me until the coming harvest.

Puh Tah Muh: Naw Muh also has nothing left. Pa Noh is my son-in-law. His house and his rice barn were burnt down by the SLORC troops and he had nothing left. They destroyed everything and spread it around on the ground. The same for Pa Wih Ber. He had nothing left. He is not here anymore. And Pa Hser Geh, everything of his was burnt down. Naw Kee Paw Heh is from Lay Wah village, and all of her things were destroyed too. Saw Yeh is also from Lay Wah village group. His hut on the farm was burnt down, and he also did not have enough food for the rainy season.

The SLORC entered our village on 19 May, then they burnt it down at 9:00 a.m. on 22 May. There were about 300 or 400 men, and we saw two DKBA soldiers. When they entered the village, only the women and the elderly men stayed in the village. The other men went to hide outside the village. The soldiers ordered us to move to a place they said they had prepared for us [relocation camp]. They ordered us to go stay at Klaw Hta, near Baw Kaw Der village. They said if we didn't go there, they would destroy, burn, and kill. They said we had to go there to make peace with them. We don't know how we can make our living there, we have nothing there. We will not be allowed to come back and work our farms here. We are afraid of them, so we ran away from them. We don't want to go to the place they asked us to move to. Even if we have no food, we will run away from them.

When they entered our village they took so many things: machetes, spades, hoes, and knives, and destroyed clothing and baskets. You don't even need to ask about our livestock — they regarded it as their own. They took everything. They didn't even leave a needle for us.

Naw Say Paw: The SLORC soldiers came to my house and took everything. After that, a soldier took me to the bedroom and ordered me to lie down. He was pointing his knife at me. I started shouting and yelling, and another woman came in so then the SLORC soldier left.

Naw Tha Ghay: One woman had only one daughter and her daughter was staying in Papun, but she was still staying in the village with her elderly mother. When SLORC came they destroyed everything, all their belongings. They had nothing left, so the women had to go to Klaw Hta to stay with relatives. The soldiers destroyed everything, pots, clothing, and so on.

Naw Lah: I have a younger brother. I can't escape by myself, because my brother can't run. Even if I escape, I'll have no food in the jungle and no waterproof for shelter. Then, the SLORC troops came and destroyed everything. I have nothing left. I don't know what I'm going to do. I have no choice but to go stay with relatives in Klaw Hta and obey SLORC. Whatever they ask, I will have to do.

Puh Klo Thu: I saw some soldiers. They came to my house and destroyed everything,

even the rice threshing basket. A soldier pushed my wife and I thought he wanted to rape her. I told myself that if he raped my wife, I wouldn't care about my life, I would fight him. But he teased her and then he left.

Naw Eh Po: I had to be a porter when the soldiers left to go back. They made me carry their bags. There were five women altogether. We were all muh k'nav [unmarried teenagers]. The loads were very heavy, and we had to carry them back to their base in Papun. When we arrived there, some Karens who live in Papun went to see the SLORC officers and got us released.

Puh Tah Muh: When they left the village, they said, "We will come back to your village and kill everyone we see here if you don't obey our order." If we had security and enough food, we would like to stay in our own area with our own people. But if we have no food nor security, then even though we don't want to go, we will have to go and stay with them. There is nothing more we can say. We have heard a lot about the place they have prepared for us. There we will have no time to rest. We will have to work for them all the time. Even the women and children there have to be porters. For now, we will share what we have. We have very little but we can share what we have among us. If we are rich, we will be rich together. While we are poor, we will be poor together.

Interview: 84-HRV: Livelihood, Slavery, Torture

[The following was told by a Karen man from N— village in Papun District, Karen State who was taken as a guide and human mine-sweeper on 19 May 1995]

Source: KHRG

I was eating sticky-rice in my house. I got up to chase the chickens out of the house. Just then I heard a strange sound so I turned to look, and I saw a SLORC soldier. He said, "Don't run!" and ordered me to sit down. Another one came and grabbed me by the collar, and another tied my hands behind my back and ordered me, "Go!", and then I had to go in front of the column. Soldiers talked to me in Burmese but I didn't understand, so one pointed his gun at me and said, "Boom". I guessed that it meant if I ran away they would shoot me. They told me to take them to Thay Ko Der village, and when they arrived at Thay Ko Der they started shooting at people because the people were running away. They ordered me to lift my hands as high as I could behind my back, and then they tied me very tightly to a house. I was in much pain because of the way they tied me. Then they asked me so many questions, and while they were asking they slapped me in the face, grabbed my hair and shook my head. No matter what they did to me they didn't get any answer, because I don't speak or understand Burmese. After that they stopped and left me there like that for the whole night. The following morning, they untied me. In that morning, the Karen soldiers shot at them in the village so they came and tied me up again and moved me to another place. There they didn't tie me up as tightly. I slept another night like

that, then the following morning, we went to Maw Lu. Then they didn't tie me anymore. When they returned from Maw Lu they passed through Thay Ko Der, and the last group in the column started burning down the village. Then they moved on to Toe Kaw Der and we slept one night there.

The following morning, the soldiers told me that they were going to release me. At noon, one of the DKBA soldiers who came along with SLORC came to me and I told him, "Please help me to tell the soldiers to release me". He said he would help me but that I would have to go and stay in the place that SLORC prepared for us. But they didn't release me. They took me all the way to their camp south of Papun, and they released me there.

Interview: 85-HRV: Women, Slavery, Torture

[*The following woman is from N— village near Thay Ko Der, the same village as the man interviewed above. She is married, but all of her children have died.*]

Source: KHRG

SLORC captured me in my house. They ordered me to come down out of the house and to go to the school compound. They asked me some questions: "Did you see any Karen soldiers?" — I said, "Yes". "Did they ever come to your house?" — I said, "No, they passed through the village on the road." Then they tied me up and ordered me to walk in front of the column. They told me, "If the Karen soldiers ambush us along the way, we will kill you on the spot." They put their backpacks on our shoulders, and we went to Thay Ko Der village. When we arrived there they put us [*the women*] in one house and let us warm up near the fireplace, but they tied us to the bamboo post. They tied our whole bodies. It was so tight across my breasts, it was so painful that I started crying. When they saw me crying, the soldiers loosened the ropes a little bit, and then we slept there one night. The following morning, they untied us and they said, "Don't run away. We will release you." But when some Karen soldiers shot at them, they tied us up again and we spent another night there. In the daytime, they untied our hands and ordered us to pound paddy for them. At night, they tied us again. That evening, Karen soldiers came and shot at them again, and SLORC had one dead and one wounded.

Interview: 86-HRV: Detention, Slavery, Livelihood, Women

[*This woman is from the same village and was also taken.*]

Source: KHRG

I was captured by SLORC in my village. They ordered me to go to the school compound, then they accused me of being a Karen soldier's wife [*she is not*]. They tied me, grabbed my collar and made me carry a soldier's backpack. Along the way,

we saw soldiers setting the villagers' rice barns on fire. First they took some rice and made us carry it, then what was left was all burned. That place was very near Thay Ko Der village. When we arrived at Thay Ko Der, they pushed us all into one house and tied us in a standing position to the bamboo post. One of my friends started crying loudly, so they let us sit down and tied us very tightly to the post again. They tied our whole body, our legs and our chests, to the post. We had to sleep one night in that house. In the morning, the SLORC soldiers came to untie the rope and said they would release us. Then Karen soldiers came and fought them, and they tied us again and moved us to another place. We saw a man from our village tied up like us, and the soldiers said, "Don't try to talk to this man or we will kill you all!" The man was tied up very tightly, worse than us.

The soldiers fed us. The food was enough because we couldn't eat very well, but if we were at home that amount would be too little. They gave us some chicken and pork. I knew that they killed those animals in the village, because I saw them killing many of the villagers' pigs. At noon, one officer came to us with one DKBA soldier. The DKBA soldier said to us, "We DKBA soldiers want peace. So tell your brothers, mother, sisters and all your relatives to come and join us. We will have peace." We said nothing but nodded, "Yes". They didn't untie us for the night — we had to sleep with our bodies tied up with rope [*but hands and legs free*]. During the night, a SLORC soldier guarded us because they were afraid we might run away. One of them tried to unbutton a button of my shirt, so I made a movement and he stopped. A moment later, he tried to pull up my sarong. I pushed his hand off and pushed it back down. Then he tried to grab my leg, and I pushed him away and started to light the fire. The soldier blew the fire out, but after that nothing happened.

We spent two nights at Thay Ko Der, then the column moved to Maw Lu. We slept one night in Maw Lu and we were still tied with rope. During the night, a SLORC soldier tried to remove my sarong again. He tried another girl first, but she hit him with a piece of firewood so then he tried me again. When he tried to remove my sarong, I kicked him. Then a sergeant came around and he went back to his place. The following night, we slept beside an elderly man that they'd captured along the way. The sergeant also slept close to us. A soldier came again to try to rape me. I kicked him and made noise and he left.

The following morning they made me pound the rice for them, but they didn't give us any breakfast. We had to move to another place and they gave us food on the way. Along the way we had to carry their backpacks and we were tied with a rope. I had to carry one and a half big tins [*25 kg.*] of rice, and the other girls had to carry soldiers' two big backpacks each. They took us to T'Kung Taing army camp [*near Papun*]. I don't know how many villagers they had with them [*because there were several hundred soldiers in the column*]. Then they released us the following morning, because a DKBA soldier went and asked the SLORC officers to release us. We were released and sent to a Buddhist monastery in Papun. There we saw a monk

from Myaing Gyi Ngu [*most likely a follower of U Thuzana*] and about 10 [DKBA] soldiers there. They said they came to work together with SLORC because they want peace. I don't believe them — I only nodded, "Yes" to them in Thay Ko Der because we were tied up in front of them. Because of what they are doing I don't believe them. They act the same as SLORC soldiers.

Interview: 87-HRV: Livelihood, Displacement

[*The following written SLORC order was received by several Karen villages north-east of Papun.*]

Source: KHRG

[Stamp:]	To:	U xxxx Chairman xxxx village yyyy village zzzz village
Village LORC xxxx village Tract		

All the villagers from these villages must move to Kler O Der and Wah Mi Day and settle down there. In the future, there will be so many difficulties and problems in your present home area. I inform you with this letter because I have sympathy for your villagers. After you move, you can come to shop in Papun on Mondays and Fridays.

[Signed]
Chairman
village LORC
xxxx village tract

[*Note: These villages are in the hills, and are being forced to move to the plains, about three kilometres outside of Papun near a SLORC Army base. Not only will the adaptation to life in the plains be difficult for them and probably result in disease, but they will have no land to farm and will be used almost constantly as forced labour for the army base.*]

[*The following interview is with a villager in one of the villages affected by the aforementioned order:*]

According to this order we will have to evacuate our village, but we can't because we have no food. We know that this has been planned by SLORC. We don't want to go and stay under their control. We don't want to be SLORC slaves. We have no food, and we don't know if our leaders [KNU] can help us. SLORC came to our village to burn it down, and they have done so many evil things already. They say that they want to make peace, but each time they come to our village they destroy

our belongings and burn down our houses. Now we have to face so many difficulties.

If we move there, they will not give us any food. We will have to find our own food. They won't allow us to come back and work on our farms. After that, they will kill us. They will make us work for them until we all die. So we can't do anything, just hide and run into the jungle and eat the food we took with us. This will be very difficult for us. That's why we hope our leaders will advise us.

If they find us in the jungle, SLORC will burn down our huts and destroy our food and belongings, just like they did to Thay Ko Der village. If they catch the women, we don't know what they will do to them. But if we go to the place that they have intended for us, they will treat us as they wish. Even if they want to kill us, they will kill us, just as easily as we would kill a chicken under our houses. The places SLORC wants everyone to move to are Klaw Hta, Wah Mi Day, Maw Thay Der and Ler Kyer Ko villages. But those villages don't have peace. SLORC says they will make peace but this is not real peace. If they really want peace, they have to treat us differently from this. If we stay like this, there will only be more and more problems.

If we go to the new place, we will suffer the same as the others who have gone [*referring to forced labour and lack of food*]. We don't want to face these difficulties. We villagers, every morning and every evening, discuss this situation each other, but we can't come to any decision because there is nothing we can do in this situation. We can't stay like this any longer. They want to force us to go to the relocation camp. If we stay here, they will beat, torture, even kill us. We have to choose how we will stay alive, but we have no choice. That's why we need our leaders to guide us. Our leaders started the revolution with only five bullets. Now, we feel very sorry if after all this we have to go and stay under SLORC's control.

Interview: 88-HRV: Slavery, Livelihood, Displacement, Torture, Minorities

[*The following is from an interview with a KNLA security officer in the area.*]

Source: KHRG

From my point of view, I can see SLORC saying that they are going to make peace with us, but theirs is not an honest way. If they want real peace with the Karen people then they need to stop attacking the KNLA troops. We received an order [*in late March*] from Headquarters that we are not allowed to go and attack SLORC, so we haven't attacked any SLORC positions. KNU leaders are trying to find a way to genuine peace. On the other hand, SLORC has destroyed villages in this area and has tried to locate and attack our troops. Every villager they catch, they take as a porter and torture them. They are always talking about peace, but what they do is very different from what they say. That's why even though we were ordered not to fight against the SLORC troops, we have to. We don't go and attack them. We just

attack to protect and defend when they come.

If they want real peace, they should talk to our leaders. Instead, they come and destroy our villages, make problems for the villagers and try to use Divide and Rule tactic in our area. If they regard themselves as a good government and regard all the ethnic peoples as equal to the Burmans, then they must accept the KNU's approach for genuine peace. This is the only way they can get genuine peace in Burma. But they only want to crush our struggle and give more problems to the villagers. They must know that they can't destroy our Karen struggle in this way. The only way they can stop the struggle is to give equal rights to the minorities and listen to the voices of the minority groups. If they don't, the struggle of the minority groups will never cease.

Interview: 89-HRV: Refugee, Slavery, Livelihood, Displacement, Torture, Detention, Women

[The following interview was conducted in a refugee camp in Thailand with recent arrivals.]

Name :	Saw Robert
Age:	28
Sex :	Male
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married with three children (age five months to five years)
Occupation:	Farmer
Address :	Wah Mi Day village, Papun Township, Karen State
Interviewed:	26 June 1995
Source:	KHRG

I came here together with my wife and children. We arrived on 20 June. It took us three days to come directly here. We slept in villages along the way. Our village is seven miles from Papun. Life over there is very hard. We are farmers, but every month we have to go for 10 days as porters for the [SLORC] army. If we can't go for 10 days when our turn comes, we have to pay 2,500 Ks. We can't afford this because we are poor, so we fled to the border. When you can't pay, the SLORC soldiers come to the village, take you by force and never release you. You have to take risks and escape from them. If not, you will be a porter until you die. The other reason we came here is that SLORC told us we could only stay one more year in Wah Mi Day village and in coming year they will move us to Khaw Taw Pu. [note: right now, SLORC is forcibly relocating villages from remoter areas to Wah Mi Day. See SLORC order and related interviews. "By coming year" he means sometime after rainy season.]

We have had to work for the soldiers for almost 10 years. At first it was more or less okay for us, but the longer you work for them, the stricter the rules become. Now it is the worst. The soldiers are from Papun. IB 19 always asks for porter fees. We have to pay porter fees to three battalions in Papun: IB 19 and LIBs 341 and 434. You have to pay 2,500 Ks every time your time as a porter comes and when you can't go. Each family also has to pay 200 Ks every month as regular porter fees. We tried to get this money by working hard. All the money we can get, we have to give all to them. We have to pay whichever battalion requests the money. The soldiers come to the village very often, and they never bring their own food with them, they just take the villagers' food by force. They don't bother to ask for permission, they just take whatever they want. We dare not stop them. Whenever they catch villagers outside the village, if it's a man they beat him. If it's a woman, they don't beat her but they take her along as a porter to their camp, like Ku Seik camp near Papun.

DKBA don't do anything to our villagers, but some villagers who had connections with the KNLA troops were arrested, had their guns taken away and they were taken to Khaw Taw, where they were made to drink the Buddhist monk's medicine. I heard that after drinking it a person changes, but whenever I saw DKBA soldiers I didn't notice any difference. Both SLORC and DKBA gave us the order to move. SLORC told us first, then DKBA. The villagers said we don't want to move, we want to stay in our village. So they said they will come and take us by force to Khaw Taw. They sent us an order letter and they also told us. After the headman read the letter, he burned it. They ordered all the village heads to go to Papun and explained it to them at the beginning of this rainy season [*June*]. The [SLORC] Strategic Commander in Papun called the meeting. The villages ordered to move were Klaw Hta, Kaneh Haw Hta, Baw Kaw Der, Thay Pler Hta, Kler Der, Wah Mi Day, Htee Kay Der, Thay Ko Der, Lay Wah, Ya Ploh Der, Maw Thay Der, and ..., altogether 12 villages. They are to move after rainy season [*after October*]. The villagers have no idea at all what to do about this. Some think about running away, some think about trying to stay in their village anyway, and some try to flee to the border. In Wah Mi Day village, there were 20 households. Now three families have come here [*to Thailand*]. The rest are still living in the village, but all of them have made up their minds to come over here because they cannot bear the suffering any more. If there are no problems along the way they will all come here, because there is nowhere else they can go. The whole area is full of SLORC troops. I think no one can survive in Wah Mi Day village anymore. Even if people could survive there, life will be just too difficult for them. Only if there is no more fighting in Burma, then I will want to go back.

**Interview: 90-HRV: Refugee, Slavery, Livelihood, Displacement,
Torture, Women, Child, Forced Labour, Religion**

[The following interview was conducted in a refugee camp in Thailand with recent arrivals.]

Name : Saw Hla Kyaw
 Age: 38
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married with five children (age 11 months to 15 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Thay Ko Der village, Papun Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 25 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

My whole family came together. It took us three days to get here, and we have been here for eight days. We came because SLORC came together with DKBA soldiers and destroyed all of our belongings, so we had nothing left to eat. They burned the houses just recently, at the beginning of this month [*actually on 22 May*]. There were more than 200 soldiers. Ten were DKBA and the rest were SLORC troops from LID 77. When they entered the village, they saw the villagers running away from them so they shot at the villagers but didn't hit anyone. Then, some of the soldiers took positions outside the village and some right in the village. They slept three nights in our village. After the first night, there was fighting [*with KNLA*] in the morning. Then, there was fighting again in the following morning. On the third day they left, and when they left they burned down the village. There were 15 houses in Thay Ko Der, and they burned more than 10 of them. Three houses weren't burned. They also burned our rice. Some of the rice was not consumed by the fire, so they threw it around onto the ground [*rendering it useless*].

During that time I ran away from the village. All of us were staying in the jungle while the Burmese were in the village. We stayed together and slept in one place, and we had no food to eat. While they were in the village they captured three men and five women together with their children, and they tied them all up. I don't know exactly what they did to them all. After they tied up the men they kicked them, punched them and beat them. I know they tried to rape the women, but the women stopped them. They didn't release the women. They made the women carry their loads and took them to Papun, then they released them there [*see the related testimonies of two of the women from a village near Thay Ko Der*]. They also released the men in Papun, but some of the men ran away first. Papun is nine miles from Thay Ko Der. Two of the men were quite young, and the eldest was about 40. All the women were about 25 or 30. Three of the women are married and two are single.

Now we don't know what to do, we just wonder what we can do for the future. Some of the villagers tried to get some rice from their neighbours by exchanging whatever they had left. [*Most villagers keep some rice and other belongings hidden in the forest for eventualities like this.*] People cannot last long living like that. They can't do anything. They said if possible, they would all come here. Now, three households have come already. The others are still staying in that area, but not together at the same place. There was are no family left in Thay Ko Der village.

Before this happened, DKBA already asked us to go back with them [*to Khaw Taw*] and co-operate with them, and said if we did not go they would come and burn and destroy our village. SLORC had already ordered us to go to Wah Mi Day village, but we didn't go. They called the village head to meet them in Papun. They also demanded money from the villagers, and when the villagers couldn't pay they didn't dare stay in the village anymore. They [*SLORC*] also demanded roofing and bamboo for their camp, and they made us go down to their camp. Now, they say they're going to pave a motorway from Papun to Klaw Hta after rainy season. I don't know what for, maybe to send supplies for their troops. They'll make the villagers build it for them. There are also problems for the people in Papun Town. They have to be porters and pay porter fees, and they have to work for SLORC just like us. As for DKBA, they asked for soldiers, but we paid no attention. DKBA also said they were going to get all the Christians [*the word translated here as 'get' can mean either 'wipe out' or 'capture'*].

I didn't have much to bring along here with me. This is all I have [*the clothes on his back*]. I have one old blanket, and I carried cooking pots with me. Now we stay here with others, and eat together with them. If there is no more fighting and all is stable there, then I hope I can go back and stay. I don't think I can stay with SLORC. Also, I'm afraid of DKBA. I'm not afraid of KNU. We don't have to be afraid of them.

Interview: 91-HRV: Refugee, Slavery, Livelihood, Displacement, Torture, Religion

[*The following interview was conducted in a refugee camp in Thailand with recent arrivals.*]

Name :	Saw Shwe Hla
Age:	44
Sex :	Male
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married with three children (age 6, 16 and 23 years)
Occupation:	Farmer
Address :	Bwa Der village, Papun Township, Papun District, Karen State
Interviewed:	26 June 1995

Source: KHRG

We arrived here more than three weeks ago. We came together with three families. It took five days, because on the way we had to carry some belongings and people had to carry their children. There were small children with us, and it was raining. We came because if SLORC or DKBA capture us they make us carry very heavy burdens, then when we can't carry it they kick us, beat us, punch us. So we were afraid and dared not stay in our village anymore. For our food we had to look for a little bit here, a little bit there. It was very hard for us. There are many more people who want to come here, but now SLORC is blocking their way and they cannot come.

Even before DKBA [*before January 1995*], SLORC used to come. They took porters, and they forced us to go for free labour. At the time I was ill, so my juniors went instead of me. Sometimes we had to go for one month, sometimes one week or 10 days. Those who can't carry, the soldiers drag them to the side of the path and kick and beat them and throw them by the side, and they manage to come home by themselves. Some die, because the soldiers kick and beat them until they can't make it back by themselves. SLORC also asked us for porter fees when we couldn't go, and we had to sell our cattle to get money to pay their porter fees. Some had to pay 50 Ks, some 200 Ks, some 400 or 500 Ks. They forced us to pay. Even if we had no money they wouldn't understand, we just had to pay. If you cannot pay, they do to you whatever they wish. This has happened since 1975. Before, we could pay the money and stay in our village. Life was hard, it was hard to live in our village, but we could stay there. We had to worry for our food and fear SLORC, but we could survive. But now the situation has changed, it's not like before. Whenever they come they kick, they punch, they beat us and they burn down our houses, so we can't stay there anymore.

Now DKBA are together with SLORC, and they treat us the same as SLORC do. The first time SLORC and DKBA came, they said they would kill all the Christians. Then they ordered us to go live at Khaw Taw, and we said, "We won't go, you will kill us there". So they beat and kicked people. That was in March. Some people from villages near Bwa Der who were not Christian went, but no Christian went. We heard that any Christians who go there are treated very badly or killed. Ko Per Baw said Christians also have to go, but when they get there Ko Per Baw will force them to put on the robes of Buddhist monks. If the Christians refuse this, I have no idea what they'll do to them. Last month in Bwa Der, they burned the church and many houses both where the sun rises and where the sun sets [*in both eastern and western parts of the village*], and rice barns and huts in the fields or on the farms. They took all our things that they wanted. Whatever they didn't want or couldn't carry, they burned all of it. When they burned it, they came together with SLORC. There were seven Ko Per Baw, and more than 100 SLORC soldiers [*although according to the testimony of several others, these two groups were separate and did not arrive at the village together; DKBA arrived first on their own*].

The first time when SLORC came they burned down some houses in Bwa Der, people dared not stay in the village and moved to the jungle around the village. Then when Ko Per Baw came together with SLORC they burned down all the houses in the village. They burned 40 or 50 houses in the area. In Bwa Der [*main village*] there used to be 10 or 20 houses, but villagers had already moved to here and there, so there were only six households remained in the main village. The church was the first building they burned! Ko Per Baw and SLORC took the big church bell away to Khaw Taw [*actually they were taking it to Meh Kay Kyaw, a pagoda on the Salween River*]. It was a big bell, like this [*he showed about a half metre diameter*]. This bell wasn't bought by the villagers, we couldn't buy such a bell. It was donated by an old white missionary. While they were burning the houses and church, no villagers were in the village. We had all run and were hiding in the forest around the village. That night, the soldiers captured seven people who went back to get their belongings. I knew three of them — Pa Day Bu, By Wah Pa and Bu Ghay. The following morning, the soldiers left the village. There was fighting not far away to the west, and all seven men managed to escape.

My house was burned completely! We came with only the clothes on our bodies and a few small things. Everything else was burned and destroyed. [*The village was burned on 5 May.*] We came and crossed the Salween [*river*] and waited in Klay Hta to see if we'd be able to go back again. But the situation was only getting worse and worse and we couldn't go back, so eventually we moved here to the camp. Along the way we just asked the Karen people we knew from Thailand to help us. We managed to get a little bit of rice. Also I had a little bit of money with me and I spent it, but now I have nothing left. Now there are six families here, but others have gone to two different camps [*At the time of the interview, there were at least 26 families from around Bwa Der who had just arrived in the camps*]. Some are still left there because the way here is blocked. Life for them will be very hard, but I think slowly, slowly, they will find some way to survive. I won't go back. To go back now would only be looking for trouble. If there is no peace and they don't give us independence, nobody will go back. Dead or alive, we will stay here.

Interview: 92-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Displacement, Execution,

[*The following interview was conducted in a refugee camp in Thailand with recent arrivals.*]

Name :	Pa Ler Muh
Age:	47
Sex :	Male
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married with no child
Occupation:	Farmer

Address : Toh Nya Der village, Par Haik village-tract, Papun Township, Papun District, Karen State
 Interviewed: 26 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

We arrived more than two weeks ago. We spent five days on the way. We came because SLORC was going to attack Day Pu Noh and our village is along their way, so we dared not stay in the village anymore and we fled. Day Pu Noh is two hours' walk from Toh Nya Der, just the other side of the mountain. [*Day Pu Noh is about 20 km north of Papun, and Toh Nya Der is just east of Day Pu Noh. The SLORC troops have advanced through Toh Nya Der area and are now attacking Day Pu Noh from the east. This is the beginning of an offensive on the traditionally strong KNU area of B'Nay Per Ko and Ler Mu Plaw, north of Day Pu Noh along the Bway Loh Kloh (Yunzalin) River.*] SLORC came to our village just two weeks before we left. Fighting occurred very close to our village at that time. Now they're organising so many troops in Papun, five hours' walk away. They say they're going to take the strong Karen position at Day Pu Noh, and it's very close to us so we dared not stay. All the high points behind our village [*to the east*] like Thu Kyo and Muh K'nav Lay have already been occupied by SLORC troops. If they start shelling, most of their shells will explode near our village, some right in our village, so we dared not stay there anymore.

When SLORC came to the villages around there they took everything, chickens, pigs, they didn't even leave people their underwear, they took it all. SLORC sent a letter that said all the villagers have to stay in our villages, and if they find anyone hiding in the forest they will regard those people as their enemies and kill them all, even the children. Two weeks ago SLORC arrested two parish leaders from Pa Maw Heh from Par Haik parishes, and the Kaw Boke Parish head whose name I didn't know. They were arrested for working with KNU. They killed the Kaw Boke parish head and they took Pa Maw Heh to Papun — we didn't know if they planed to kill him or not. [*A later report came in that Pa Maw Heh has also been executed.*] We had to hide all our rice and other things in the jungle, so we have to be afraid of fire or elephants destroying them. And if SLORC finds it they will destroy it. I haven't seen Ko Per Baw yet and we didn't get any word yet, but they will come.

When we came here we had to face problems from avoiding Burmese troops, travelling at night, and then when we crossed the motorway we had to do it at night [*the road from Papun northwest to the Salween River at Kyauk Hnyat, where SLORC now has a massive presence*]. There were about 50 houses in Toh Nya Der, but there are probably no villagers left there anymore. Those who remained have probably scattered into the forest by now. Most of them want to come here.

Interview: 93-HRV: Refugee, Women, Child, Livelihood, Displacement, Slavery

[The following interview was conducted in a refugee camp in Thailand with recent arrivals.]

Name : Naw Lah K'Paw
 Age: 17
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Single
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Baw Kaw Der village, Papun Township, Papun District, Karen State
 Interviewed: 26 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

My parents are still alive. They've gone to look for food. I have three brothers and sisters. We got here one week ago — no, two weeks. We ran from the Burmese. We saw Ko Per Baw. As they came with the Burmese who came to my village and took all our things, we ran and came over here. They came recently, took everything and then they left. They are from LIB 341 [*based in Papun*]. There were 100 or 200 or 300 of them. They ordered people to come down out of their houses. I was under our house. They pointed their guns at me, and they said nothing at all. They took our torch-light, plates, and cooking pots. They took three boxes from our hiding place, and they took the two pairs of earrings, two rings and the clothes that were in the boxes [*this would be their best hand-woven clothes and their gold jewellery, which represents their entire material wealth — Karen villagers keep money in the form of gold jewellery, colonial-era silver rupee coins, etc., not cash*]. They took all our rice that they could, and the rest they threw and scattered on the ground. There were many porters with the soldiers, there were Karen and also Burmese porters. They were carrying plates, cooking pots and things. The Burmese arrested one man in our village, tied him up and took him along as their guide until they reached Papun, then they released him there. His name is Po Kyaw, he is 30 or 40, an ordinary villager. On their way, whenever the Burmese saw a rice barn, they ripped the roof off. They always do this. [*Villagers hide unhusked paddy in barns in the forest to save it from SLORC. Once the roof is ripped off, the paddy will be destroyed by rain or animals.*]

After they left we didn't have any blankets or things any more. We just stayed in the village like that for three days. We still had paddy to eat [*unhusked paddy from their barn in the forest*]. But we were afraid and we had nothing left with us, we had no cooking pots, so we left. From Baw Kaw Der to here, we slept three nights along the way. There was only one problem, when we had to cross the motorway. When we got here, an uncle over there gave us three plates, and someone gave us a pot.

[Question: So can you go back to your village now? She answered:] Can we go back? Have all the Burmese left?

Interview: 94-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Displacement

[The following interview was conducted in a refugee camp in Thailand with recent arrivals.]

Name : Pa Bleh
 Age: 35
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married with five children (age 1 to 10 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Baw Der village, Papun Township, Papun District, Karen State
 Interviewed: 25 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

I have been here over three weeks already. I am with my children. My wife is in hospital in Chiang Mai. She was wounded by the attack of a helicopter. I wasn't there when it happened. You can ask her father. [After their group had crossed the Salween River into Thailand, they were attacked by a Thai Army helicopter gunship and his wife was shot and badly wounded in the hip. Other refugees and villagers managed to get her to Chiang Mai for treatment. The Thais claimed they were attacking DKBA troops in retaliation for border incursions into Thailand (this may have been one of the fake attacks when they claimed to be attacking DKBA bases in Burma). See her father Puh Klo Htoo's testimony.] We left our village because of DKBA. They came and gave us trouble, and ordered us to go stay at Khaw Taw. People didn't know what to do. We came here.

Interview: 95-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Displacement

[The following interview was conducted in a refugee camp in Thailand with recent arrivals.]

Name : Phu Klo Htoo
 Age: 60
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Widower for almost 20 years, four children and many grandchildren
 Occupation: Farmer

Address : Baw Der village, Papun Township, Papun District, Karen State
 Interviewed: 25 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

I arrived here three or four weeks ago. I dared not live in my village anymore because I'm afraid of Ko Per Baw. They said that they will destroy us completely because we are Christian. They said they will wipe us out. They came to the village often. Whenever they came they ordered us to go to Khaw Taw, ordered us to give them guns, and they asked for food, rice, whatever they wanted. We had to go as porters for SLORC as well as Ko Per Baw. They didn't fix the number of people. Whenever they asked, they just asked for however many porters they wanted, and we had to give to them. Men only had to go, but they didn't take me. They had to go for two or three days, sometimes more than that. For the time being we can't go back to stay in our village, because DKBA has not finished their task yet. They are going to continue their programme in the future [of wiping out the Christians].

We left before they burned the village. I came with my daughter's family. We were on the Thai side [*of the Salween River*], and it was in the evening. We were resting in a village, preparing to move. The helicopters came — I saw two helicopters. They were very low. The soldiers from the helicopters saw us. There were six families in our group. They saw us. I was right there. They shot, and my daughter was wounded in her hip, like this [*he demonstrated the bullet entering the back of her hip and exiting from the front beside the groin area*]. She was seriously wounded. I asked people to send her from one place to another, step by step, until she got to the hospital. I asked one person to take care of her on the way to the hospital. That was one month ago, and we have no news of her. Her name is Naw Bee Sah. She is 30 years old. You already spoke to her husband. Please send us news of her if you can find out. [*A medical aid organisation has now looked into her case and notified the family. Naw Bee Sah was shot by a Thai Army helicopter gunship in an abandoned Karen village on the east bank of the Salween River south of the Thai trading village of Mae Sam Lap. During that time, the Thai Army claimed that it was repelling all SLORC and DKBA forces who crossed the border and attacking DKBA bases on the Burmese side of the river in that area with helicopter gunships, though it appears that these attacks were probably faked to appease Thai public opinion over SLORC and DKBA's incursions into Thailand. This very attack may have been one of those reported in the Thai media as a great blow against DKBA. Puh Klo Htoo says others in the group of refugees told him a group of either DKBA or KNLA soldiers had crossed the river into Thailand shortly before the attack, although he never saw them. He is adamant that the helicopter was close enough to see that it was firing on villagers.*]

Interview: 96-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Displacement, Forced labour, Religion

[The following interview was conducted in a refugee camp in Thailand with recent arrivals.]

Name : Saw Po Thu
 Age: 35
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married with four children (age 3, 5, 7 and 9 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Baw Der village, Papun Township, Papun District, Karen State
 Interviewed: 26 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

I came with my whole family. We have been here for 32 days. I came to stay here because over there we have to face so many difficulties. One of our problems is that Ko Per Baw came and pushed us to go down to Khaw Taw. Another problem is food and clothing, because all our belongings were burned along with our houses. Also, several times each month SLORC ordered 20 or 30 people to go work for them, sometimes for three days, sometimes for one week. We had to send the people, or they came by themselves and took them. For Ko Per Baw we had to provide rice, but they didn't take porters.

Nobody in our village went to Khaw Taw, but in villages near us some people went. Ko Per Baw took them away, they didn't go of their own will. Some went by themselves because of the order, but some were taken along by Ko Per Baw. They came to the village very often. Every time they came the village had to give them one basket [about 33 kg.] of rice. The first time, they came together with SLORC and didn't give any trouble to the villagers, just ordered us to go down there. But the time after that we didn't see SLORC with them. There were about 50 or 60 of them. Before they came, we got their message that they were coming and everyone must stay in the village and wait for them. The people did as they were told, stayed and waited. When they arrived, they told the villagers to go down and stay at that place [Khaw Taw]. The Burmese also told us to go there, but they came to our village in a separate group. These different groups gave so many different orders to us! But all the groups told us to go down and live there [in Khaw Taw]. They said all the Buddhist villagers must go there, and if the villagers don't they will find their teacher [a Karen expression, meaning you'll meet someone who will punish you]. They also ordered people to become vegetarians. One group came along with a Buddhist monk and slept one night in our village, and that time they gave us a "final warning". They said, "All the people in your village must go down now. If you don't, this time you will really find your teacher. All the Buddhist villagers have to go, and if they don't

then the next time we will burn down all their houses.” We told them some of us are Christian, and they said, “If the Christians don’t want to go, okay, no problem. But one day you too will surely find your teacher.”

Ko Per Baw said we had to go right away, but then the Burmese troops came in later and said, “No, not right away, you can stay here for now”. The officer from LIB 434 said that. So between the groups, we didn’t know what to do. At the time, we still had our belongings in our houses and some food to eat. Ko Per Baw came several times together with SLORC soldiers. Every time they were going to burn down the village but SLORC stopped them. But then Ko Per Baw came because we didn’t pay attention to the order they gave us, and they destroyed everything so that we wouldn’t be able to stay anymore and we’d have to go to Khaw Taw. That time there was also a SLORC group, but they weren’t together. Ko Per Baw shot into the air, and they burned and destroyed our houses. They burned the church and they took the big bell away to Meh Kay Kyaw [*a Buddhist pagoda to the south overlooking the Salween River near Sleeping Dog Mountain*]. What could we do? We just stayed and watched them doing it. In Bwa Der, they burned five houses — there are only five houses in the old village, but around the village there are lots of places, one or two houses here, one or two houses there. Most of the people are Animists, not Christians. I was staying in my father-in-law’s house, and it was burned down. We didn’t know what to do then, so when they left our village we stayed a few days in a house that wasn’t burned, then we left and came here. When we came over here some families had only one cooking pot, some had two. So when one family cooked, the other family had to wait. We had no spare clothing, only the clothes on our bodies. Now there are 24 [*actually 26*] families here from Bwa Der.

Interview: 97-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Displacement, Forced labour, Religion

[*The following interview was conducted in a refugee camp in Thailand with recent arrivals.*]

Name :	Naw Sah Lwe
Age:	50
Sex :	Female
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married with six children (age 13 to 30 years)
Occupation:	Farmer
Address :	Baw Der village, Papun Township, Papun District, Karen State
Interviewed:	26 June 1995
Source:	KHRG

Our whole family came here together, one month and two days ago. We came because

of Ko Per Baw, they were going to move us. They already burned our houses and our paddy, so we had nothing and we couldn't stay there anymore. Ko Per Baw soldiers came and treated us wrongly because of the difference in our religion. They came often, and so did SLORC. Sometimes they came together. Whenever Ko Per Baw came they told us to go down to Khaw Taw, but we didn't want to go. If we go down there we'll have to worship Lord Buddha.

My house was burned, and my paddy barns were also burned. I lost one big tin of rice [16 kg.], paddy, three pots, three blankets, sleeping mats and other household utensils, a bible, a hymnbook, and everything people need to live. After that as I couldn't stay in the village anymore, I went to stay at Noh Pu village, located beside the mountain. Then Ko Per Baw soldiers came to Noh Pu and told us to go down to their place [*Khaw Taw*], and they came more than once. So we dared not stay there anymore, and some of our nationals [*meaning KNLA soldiers*] came and took us along the way here. Some of the Noh Pu villagers are still there, and they have to work for SLORC. There's no problem for us here, but there were many problems in Bwa Der and Noh Pu. Here the only problem is diseases. Dare we go back? If SLORC and DKBA over there don't disappear, can we go back? If the foreigners say we have to go, we'll go back, but if they say we can stay here then we'll stay here. Even if the fighting stops I dare not go back, because Ko Per Baw still persecute the Baptists and other Christians.

Interview: 98-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Displacement, Forced labour, Slavery, Torture

[The following interview was conducted in a refugee camp in Thailand with recent arrivals.]

Name :	Puh Kaw Taw
Age:	63
Sex :	Male
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married with seven children (age 11 to 28 years)
Occupation:	Farmer
Address :	Baw Der village, Papun Township, Papun District, Karen State
Interviewed:	26 June 1995
Source:	KHRG

We arrived here on the 12th [of June]. We came over here because we had faced so many problems. It was the way the Ko Per Baw treated us. They said they were going to drive us all down to Khaw Taw. They said if we didn't go down to Khaw Taw, they would hand over all the villagers to SLORC. If they do that, SLORC will use us as they wish. They can order you to work for them for one month, or for one year. They will treat us as slaves.

I've had to go as a porter for SLORC two times this year. They sent a letter, and I had to go. They ordered 40 people from Toh Nyo, Paw Hta and Bwa Der together. One person from each house. My children were not around, so I had to go. The first time was about two months ago. They made me carry about 20 viss [32 kg.] for one day. I was carrying sarongs, shirts and other things they had taken from villagers, to Ho Kho. They took 12 of us from Bwa Der that time, and there were also people from other villages. The second time I had to be a porter from Paw Hta to Thaw Let Hta [*opposite the Thai trading village of Mae Sam Lap*], about one month ago. We had to carry supplies for SLORC for two days. If a person couldn't carry his burden and fell down, they ran to him and kicked him immediately. I saw. The porters were middle aged, getting old already. Most were from Paw Hta. We ate with the soldiers, but they only gave us prawn paste.

When Ko Per Baw burned the village [*on 5 May*], my house was already destroyed so they couldn't burn it. They destroyed it when they came for the first time. They even ate my birds and chickens. Some Karen soldiers used to stay with me, and some of my children and nephews were Karen soldiers. So first Ko Per Baw fired a shell at my house [*most likely an M79 grenade*], then they shot their guns, rushed into my house and started tearing it down. They ripped off the whole roof of my house. When they started shooting, I ran into the jungle. There was no one fighting against them, they were just shooting into the village. I went and stayed with my relatives in another part of the village for two months. Then I came here with them. Twenty six families came. We organised our things by ourselves, but we got help to come here from KNU [*an escort of soldiers part way*]. We heard that Ko Per Baw would try to stop us. On the way they came close to us, but we managed to avoid them and arrived here. If possible we want to go back, because it's our home and we want to make our living there. But if there's no opportunity to go back, we'll have to stay here. There are other families from Bwa Der and other villages who I think want to come here, but they can't get across the road because SLORC is on the road.

Interview: 99-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Displacement, Religion, Execution, Child

[*The following interview was conducted in a refugee camp in Thailand with recent arrivals.*]

Name :	Saw Kaw Lah
Age:	30
Sex :	Male
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married with one child (age 11 months)
Occupation:	Farmer
Address :	Baw Der village, Papun Township, Papun District, Karen State

Interviewed: 26 June 1995

Source: KHRG

I have been here since 30 May. When we first heard news about what was happening [at Thu Mwe Hta in December 1994, when the DKBA began to form — Bwa Der is not so far from Thu Mwe Hta] we dared not stay in our village. At that time my wife was staying at her village, Maw Kee. The other villagers and I went and stayed in the forest near our village. Ko Per Baw shot at two men, one escaped and one died. His name was Pa Lweh Mu, he was my cousin, a Karen soldier. He was 17, and both his parents are dead. They shot him on 29 December. They threw his body into the river and said, "Now, Christians, do you understand?" We ran and tried to hide in the jungle. Later we heard news that they were killing the Christians [*though there was never any extensive or systematic killing of Christians*]. When we heard this news we realised that it was not good news for us, and that the situation would get worse and worse.

Another time they came and burned the village [on 5 May]. That time I was hiding outside the village. There were only women and children in the village. Ko Per Baw came and fired their guns but they didn't hit anybody, then they burned the houses. I heard from others that my house was destroyed, but I never went back to see it myself. I stayed hiding in the forest between my village and the Salween River for nearly the whole summer, borrowing food from others or getting some from the village, trying to find out the news about what would happen next in my village and the area. I thought maybe I could go back and plant a crop, but I realised it was hopeless and I couldn't stay there anymore, so I came here. This problem is too much for man, I can only hope for the help of God to solve this problem. But for now, I dared not go back.

Interview: 100-HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Displacement, Forced labour, Torture, Execution

[The following has been summarised from an interview with a Karen teacher who recently left Nyaunglebin District to be a refugee in Thailand:]

I was working as a teacher in the middle school run by KNU in Nwa Lay Ko, in Nyaunglebin District, since May 1994. Nwa Lay Ko is the administrative headquarters of the KNU for Moo Township and is close to KNLA 8th Battalion headquarters.

The situation in our area was peaceful until the problems on the Salween River had already begun. In early January 1995, SLORC units started mobilising, and some of them from different places came together in Th'bin Nyo village. I only know that one of them was IB 54. After two days there they travelled to Yoo Lo, K'mo Lo, Keh Bwo Der, where they spent three days, and then up the ridge-line of Play Ba

mountain, which is beside Nwa Lay Ko. I don't know how many of them there were by this time, but on 11 January we got a message that they would attack the village soon. So on 11 January, we all fled Nwa Lay Ko. The KNLA soldiers stayed in the hills around the village to make defences while the rest of us kept going, escorted by a few of KNLA soldiers. Some people took everything they could from their houses, but others couldn't take much. After three hours we stopped deep in a river valley. The [KNL] district leaders came with people they had instructed to carry rice supplies and gave us orders to remain very still and quiet. They said not to cut trees to make shelters because it would be too noisy, and that if a cock crowed they would have to kill it. They said it was all right to make cooking fires only at dusk and dawn and only in caves or under rock overhangs, because of the smoke.

We stayed there and slept on leaves on the rocks. Although some people had blankets, it was very cold at night. We ate mostly rice, salt and vegetables from the jungle. Each day we could do nothing, only sit quietly and listen and wait for news. I think there were about 200 people there. Three people died there, two elderly people from sickness and one person by accident. After one week we heard that the SLORC troops had moved away without attacking, but people were not allowed to go back to Nwa Lay Ko. After about 11 days a [KNL] district leader came and told us that the way to Mah La Daw was open, but the way to K'mo Lo was not possible to travel [*due to SLORC troop presence*]. He said people who could get back to their villages should go, while others should make huts and stay in the jungle. Some people went home to get supplies and then came back. After about two weeks there were approximately 150 people still in the jungle. Some were going back to Nwa Lay Ko to tend their farms in the daytime, then coming back to their huts in the jungle at night. They stayed like this for more than one month. About two weeks later I went to another place with about 25 others.

It was about the end of the first week of February that I went to Mah La Daw village for three days, and there I heard that the SLORC soldiers had come back again. I heard that they had killed six people in Taw Po Kee, a village about one hour [*walk*] from Nwa Lay Ko. It was 11:00 a.m. and the people, who were from different families, were all together in one house eating rice when the SLORC soldiers came in and shot them all. I didn't know why. There were two men, one woman and three young boys. Then those SLORC soldiers went to 2nd Brigade [KNLA] area, which is about five hours' away. I went back to K— and stayed there for about a month before deciding to come to Thailand. I went back to Nwa Lay Ko and found that most people were choosing to stay there only in the daytime, even though the KNLA soldiers were there. Fifteen other civilians and I left and went with 30 soldiers from 102th Battalion of KNLA who were going to K—, and we went on to Thailand. The hardest part was between S— and D—, where we had to cross the motorway. It is being used by SLORC troops, so we had to travel throughout the night without any torches or other source of light. We passed very close to a SLORC base at K—, a nearby hill.

Along the journey, I got the news that SLORC soldiers had approached Nwa Lay Ko for the fourth time. At Day Taw Kee we met with a group of 15 households, about 300 people. They had come from Mudraw [*Papun*] District, and they told us of many problems there because SLORC and DKBA are operating together. Most of that group of villagers were Christian or Animist, and they told how DKBA and SLORC soldiers are ordering them all to move to Khaw Taw [*Myaing Gyi Ngu*] and harassing them. One man told me he'd been beaten for refusing to go. They also said the SLORC troops are actively taking or destroying all of their rice supplies. I heard that all the rice in Kay Hta, Paw Hta, Kyaw Nyo Hta, Bway Hta and Keh Bah villages were destroyed. We all crossed the river into Thailand together. There is nobody travelling up or down the river anywhere anymore. Many, many people are crossing to this place for shelter. The people who crossed the river with me said many more still want to come.

I have also heard that some villages in Kler Lwe Htoo [*Nyaunglebin*] District have now decided to make peace with the SLORC troops. The people there are too tired to run away any more, so they made agreements with SLORC that if they no longer run away and they give SLORC everything they want and nothing to the KNLA, then the SLORC soldiers will no longer shoot them or give them other big troubles. I heard of four villages in my area that have done this: Mah La Daw, Yoo Lo, K'mo Lo, and Baw Bee Der.

Interview: 101-HRV: Livelihood, Displacement, Forced labour, Slavery

[*The following interview was made with a KNLA officer following his return from Papun and Thaton District at the end of June 1995*]

Source: KHRG

I usually operate in [KNLA] 1st Brigade area, on the west bank of the Salween River. [*That area is west of Pa-an and Ka Ma Maung, towards Bilin and Thaton; there the Salween does not form the border with Thailand*]. In 1st Brigade there are four townships -- Pa-an, Thaton, Bilin, and Kyaikto. I didn't have any information from Kyaikto Township, but I know about Pa-an, Thaton and Bilin townships. People there were not running and hiding in the forest. If they hid in the forest, they were not able to work on their farms, so they stayed in their villages. Some went and worked for SLORC whenever they were ordered, and whenever the KNU asked their help they helped. They worked for both sides. Sometimes if the situation was a little bit better and there was not much movement of SLORC troops, then even if SLORC ordered them to go and work they did not go. But then if SLORC came and forced them, they had to go. Usually after they finish the harvest, the men go and hide themselves in the forest until the next ploughing [*this is the period from January to May -- the men hide to avoid forced labour and other abuses by SLORC. Usually they seek out a column of Karen soldiers and stay with them for protection.*] Only the women, children, and elderly stay in the village.

For the time being SLORC and DKBA have been working together. Then they made separate camps for DKBA. SLORC took only about three or four soldiers from DKBA as guides when they moved in the area. This is not only to guide them but also to give them more information about links between KNU and the villagers. Even when DKBA operate by themselves, they aren't allowed to move freely where they want, and SLORC also keeps a group near them to watch them. If DKBA soldiers move into an area, say about 30 or 40 men, then SLORC makes three or four groups of 30 to 40 men each and sends them into the area where DKBA is operating. All this is because now the Burmese have issued an order that whenever Burmese troops move, they are not to move along together with DKBA soldiers, they can only take two or three DKBA soldiers with them as guides and to collect intelligence. The reason SLORC issued this order to its soldiers, they said, is because DKBA soldiers are very hard to control, they only listen to their monk [*U Thuzana in Myaing Gyi Ngu*] and do not pay any attention to the orders of SLORC. Also, because DKBA have done so many evil things to the people, but as long as they move along with SLORC troops the people blame all these things on SLORC and not on DKBA. That's why they don't operate together anymore.

In the beginning the Buddhist monk at Khaw Taw [*U Thuzana*] was given quite a lot of money by SLORC to support his men. At first, each DKBA officer got 10,000 Ks per month and each family got two sacks of rice [*50 kg per sack*] per month and two bottles [*750 ml each*] of cooking oil. After that they reduced the officer's salary to 1,000 Ks per month and soldiers to 500 Ks per month. Then officer's salary was reduced again to 800 Ks per month, and soldiers to 300 Ks. [*Note: this may be intentional on the part of SLORC, either to force DKBA men to loot villages and thereby lose their political advantage over SLORC soldiers, or to gradually destroy DKBA now that it has served its main purpose. SLORC could easily print the cash if it wanted to.*] And now the families only get one sack of rice and one bottle of cooking oil per month .

At Khaw Taw, there were two groups of "refugees" [*i.e. the civilians who have been willingly or forcibly moved there*] — one group stayed inside the Buddhist monk's compound, and another group outside the compound. At first the two groups could go outside Khaw Taw to find food or go shopping, but later the families who stayed inside the compound were not allowed to go outside. But now they are letting them go out again to find food, because they can't provide them anymore. I didn't know exactly how many people are staying there, but most of the people from 1st Brigade area have returned to their villages. Perhaps only about 10 families from that area are still left with the monk. Now the people who stay outside the monastery compound get nothing from the monk, no rice or cooking oil. [*All families which went willingly or forcibly to Khaw Taw were promised that they would be cared for in terms of food and everything for at least one year, but this promise has been broken.*] Before, DKBA soldiers and their families got their food from SLORC, but now SLORC orders the villagers in the area to provide food for DKBA soldiers and their families. Each family in all the villages near the motorway has to give one pyi [*about 1.5 kg.*]

of rice and a quarter kilo of chillies per month [*these are large villages of several hundred houses each*]. SLORC soldiers gather all this rice and chillies and stock it in P'Nwe Kla village [*Burmese name Pein Neh Daw, a SLORC stronghold position one hour's drive from Thaton*]. Then the monk sends his men to gather it in P'Nwe Kla and take it back to Khaw Taw. Then he gives it out, but only to the families of soldiers — nobody else gets anything. As for the people from Paw Hta, To Nyo, Meh Bpa and other hill villages who have gone down to Khaw Taw [*these are the hill villagers from near the Salween River who have been forced or terrorised into moving there*], they've made a different compound and put them in there, and they get different food. This past summer [March-June 1995] there have been so many children and others at Khaw Taw who have died of cholera and other diseases, because of the change of place and change of water, and because there is no medicine there.

DKBA soldiers who stay in 1st Brigade had to go and get their food where SLORC tells them. SLORC has camps in those townships, so they tell DKBA soldiers to come to their camp to get their food. In Pa-an Township, DKBA has several checkpoints, and they have about 20 or 30 men stationed at each checkpoint. DKBA is going to build their camp at Khaw Po Pleh for 30 or 40 men. SLORC gave them money to build it, but they took the money and ordered the villagers to work for them free just like SLORC. They even demanded rice from the villagers.

The monk at Khaw Taw issued an order that in every village with less than 300 houses, even if there is a Buddhist monastery in the village, all the villagers have to go down to stay at Khaw Taw. So DKBA soldiers started moving villagers living in Maw Kyo Draw area down to Khaw Taw. [*This area in Papun District, a triangle from Ka Ma Maung 40 km north to Ka Daing Dee and 40 km northwest to Tee Pa Doh Hta (Pyinma Bin Seit), includes several big villages, like Pa Lone, Baw Kyo Let, Baw Kyo Hta, Pa Keh, Muh Wah Kwee, Bo Mah Heh, Tee There Lay, Lay Po Hta, Boh Gha and others, but none of them have more than 200 houses*]. When SLORC found out about this they issued an order telling the villagers not to move, that they must stay in their place. They told them that if DKBA tells them to move, not to listen. They gave them a letter and told them to show to DKBA. [*Because of this many villagers were caught in the middle, facing retaliation from SLORC if they moved and DKBA if they didn't, so they had to flee.*]

In my opinion, SLORC wants to destroy DKBA. I think a SLORC high-ranking officer sent a letter to the monk telling him to issue this order, so he issued it, but then the same SLORC officer issued different orders to SLORC's own soldiers. I think this is a plan to make DKBA look bad to the villagers, and the SLORC soldiers look good, so that DKBA will not get any support from the villagers. Now some villagers are already saying, "The Burmese soldiers are good. Because of them DKBA don't come and order us to move anymore."

I haven't heard news about SLORC and DKBA fighting each other, but near Khaw

Taw we often see bodies floating down the Salween River. We don't know if it is SLORC killing DKBA, DKBA killing SLORC, or what it is. There are more than 100 SLORC soldiers disguised as monks staying in Khaw Taw. They include officers and non-commissioned officers. SLORC put these "monks" in Khaw Taw to stay with the monk there, because they want to get every piece of information about what is happening with the DKBA troops and what are their plans. Even when SLORC attacked Manerplaw, one time they had no gunners for their mortars so people saw them take one monk, take off his robe and then he was the gunner for the mortar. There are so many SLORC soldiers disguised as monks that now they have spread themselves among DKBA troops.

Now the people as well as the KNLA soldiers in 1st Brigade area are very upset with this Buddhist monk [*U Thuzana*]. They say Buddhist monks have nothing to do with guns, but he has soldiers and guns in his monastery compound. Most of the people who went to stay at Khaw Taw are coming back to their villages already, including some DKBA soldiers. The people say this monk is bringing dishonour down on the monkhood. Most of the soldiers and officers in Ko Per Baw right now realise that they were wrong and they want to fight back against SLORC, but because of the disguised soldiers among DKBA troops [*there are also Karen-speaking SLORC soldiers disguised as DKBA soldiers*] they dare not talk about it openly. So to some of them, right or wrong makes no difference anymore, they just do whatever they like because it has no meaning to them anymore. At Khaw Taw, every person who says anything like "We were wrong" or "What the Khaw Taw leaders are doing is wrong" always disappears, so people cannot speak their minds openly.

At first SLORC tried to get a cease-fire with KNU but KNU didn't accept. So SLORC started planning and making misunderstandings between Christian Karen and Buddhist Karen, and they planned that once they could split the Christian and Buddhist Karen they would form an organisation to rival the KNU and then watch the result. If DKBO got more followers and support from the people, they would treat DKBO as the organisation for the Karen people and make a deal with them. But instead of becoming an organisation like SLORC wanted, DKBA could not manage to increase their numbers. Moreover, the people have gradually turned away from them. None of the top leaders from KNU went over to DKBO. Now Kyaw Than [*formerly a sergeant-major in KNDO (militia) organisation, now a DKBA General*] is the only one who is working very closely with SLORC. The other high-ranking officers in DKBA are unhappy where they are but see no opportunity to move. Now they can survive because SLORC can use them. If SLORC cannot use them anymore, they'll be finished.

In 1st Brigade area, DKBA came to Pa Ya Raw village [*Burmese name Myint Kyo*], about 200 men led by Maung Kyi, and they started organising people to support, help and follow them, but nobody listened to them and they left after four days. Again one month later, DKBA combined with SLORC, more than 500 men altogether, moved around in Thaton Township organising people and asking for

soldiers. But people there answered, "We can't support you because you are working with SLORC". DKBA tried to organise people in Baw Kyo Draw area and in 1st Brigade. They explained to the people, "We are going to make peace in the whole land. So you'll not need to give porters or money or rice, and your property will not be looted anymore. So each and every one of you, come down to Khaw Taw and gather there as our monk has ordered you. Our monk is trying to do good for Karen people and to make all Karen people live in peace." At first most people talked to each other and said this is good. They said, "We have a good monk to do good for us, and we need not be afraid anymore." But later they found out that things were different from what DKBA said. They had to give porters, they had to give rice, they had to go and work for them. Even villagers in the remote areas got letters from DKBA saying, "If you do not come down to live in Khaw Taw, we will ask SLORC to go burn and destroy your village." Some were very afraid and went down to stay in Khaw Taw. But now the people in Baw Kyo Draw area are helping KNLA troops to attack DKBA troops, and DKBA don't come any more to Baw Kyo Draw. Now people everywhere have started laying blame on the monk by saying, "He said he will do good for the Karen people, but he brings more trouble to the Karen people. We have to work for both of them [DKBA and SLORC]. They always force us, harass us. He is not a good monk, he has weapons and soldiers in his monastery compound."

Now only small numbers of real soldiers remain with DKBA. Now they recruit lazy men, men with too much debt, and men who have committed crimes, and many of their soldiers are this class of men. Most of the real soldiers from the beginning have left, but they didn't bring their guns with them. One strange thing is that if you ask them to fight back against DKBA they always refuse. They know the monk is wrong, but they have no intention to go against him. Some say that this is because of the monk's "medicine". Whether it's true or not, I have no idea. Some people say that three years after you take the monk's medicine you will either die or become a madman, and that there is also another medicine that does the same thing but after five years. I have no idea whether this is true, but many people believe this and say it. [*There are many reports of Thuzana forcing people to drink "medicine" on arrival at Khaw Taw. We have no evidence as to whether or not this is a drug; it appears more likely that it is a harmless liquid taken together with a strong and binding vow not to oppose the monk in any way, or one will die or become mad. It is then the strength of people's superstition, rather than any effects of the liquid itself, which bind them to the monk.*]

Interview: 102-HRV: Livelihood, Religion

[*This letter was written by a human rights monitor who interviewed a resident of Khaw Taw (Myaing Gyi Ngu):*]

Source: KHRG

On 14 May, I met with a person who came back from Khaw Taw. [*And he told me the following:*]

1) On 23 April 1995, he met with Saw xxxx and learned from him: that there are 500 households that are registered [*in Khaw Taw*]; that he estimates that including those from nearby and those from the western side of the Salween River, there are about 1,500 households; that there are about 3,000 households altogether, including the previous residents of Khaw Taw. [*In light of other information, this is probably an overestimate.*]

2) Saw xxxx is a section leader, so as the person responsible he sent a request to U Thuzana [*DKBA chairman*] to make arrangements to get more rice, as there is not enough for the population. U Thuzana replied that he is not responsible, that this is the responsibility of SLORC — that SLORC had told him to call back and gather all the refugees, and that they would then take full responsibility for them, so the food is their responsibility.

3) U Thuzana made a comment saying, “Do not force the people who do not want to come here anymore, leave them to their own fate. But people who are against me, even if they are monks, burn their monasteries, arrest them and send them to me.”

4) U Thuzana said, “Do not pay attention to people who do not behave according to the law, leave them to their fate. If you want to stay in peace, build more pagodas and monasteries. But if you get involved with other [*religious*] sects I will not take any responsibility for that. I will divide people into two groups: those who are vegetarians will stay with me in Khaw Taw, and the rest will be sent to Ka Ma Maung to their own fate.

5) Abbot U Thuzana of Khaw Taw gathered his reliable followers at Saw xxxx’s house on 25 April 1995 and gave them instructions as follows. He said that in the beginning he never thought such things [*the fighting and suffering*] would happen. He said he had no intention to cause these things, but that many people urged him into doing it. He could not foretell what would happen in the future. He said, “You must be very careful. You have fought SLORC before, but now you are staying among them. I have cooked rice for you, and you only have to eat it. If you cannot eat it, that is not my fault. I have eaten SLORC’s food, but I do not love them.”

6) The Abbot from a monastery in Mandalay came to Khaw Taw and told U Thuzana that what he is doing is not according to the teachings of religion. U Thuzana answered that what is happening now is not concerned with religion, it is only a conflict between Karen people themselves. Monks from A Lan Thaya [*a large and famous monastery in Thaton Township, about five miles from Thaton*] and monk U Thu Menya also came and told U Thuzana that they had led vegetarians before without any conflict between vegetarians and KNU or vegetarians and SLORC. U

Thuzana told him that it was only the Karen who created the conflict among themselves.

7) U Thuzana told his armed forces, "Enemies are enemies. SLORC are not your people. You have been fighting them but now you are staying among them. It is a good opportunity for you — keep the fishing-hook inside you. I have cooked rice for you. If you cannot eat it in a proper way, it will not be my fault."

8) Saw Kyaw Heh [*a DKBA commander*] made an understanding with two SLORC battalions from Ka Daing Dee, I don't know the battalion number. They made an agreement not to start fighting no matter what happens.

9) There are now great difficulties for those who went to Khaw Taw by force or voluntarily, because there is not enough food and it is very expensive to build a house. One piece of bamboo for building a house costs 50 Ks. It costs so much to build a house, so how can poor people build a house? Many children in Khaw Taw have died because of insufficient medicine.

[Notes: According to this information, it appears that U Thuzana himself may be having doubts about the past and future of DKBO and DKBA. It is most unusual to hear a Buddhist monk trying to back out of his own deeds and repeatedly talk about things not being his "fault". At the same time, he gives the impression that he may foresee problems between DKBA and SLORC, possibly including a withdrawal of SLORC support, a purge of DKBA, or even open fighting, with his indirect comments telling people that SLORC is still his enemy and that of his followers, and that his soldiers should see their presence inside the SLORC camp as an "opportunity" and keep the "fishing-hook" (the bitter memories) inside them. By making his own local agreement with SLORC battalions, Saw Kyaw Heh may be expressing the same fears. The information in this letter comes from a reliable source, though we have yet to get secondary confirmation on many of its details.]

Interview: 103-HRV: Livelihood, Displacement, Forced Labour, Slavery

Name : U Hla Win
 Age: 60
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with five children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Maung Mei Shaung village, Tavoy Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 19 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

[U Hla Win has now fled his village and become an internally displaced person.]

There are about 700 houses in our village. We have to send 100 villagers as railway labourers every 15 days. If a person's turn comes and he cannot go, he has to pay 1,300 Ks to the village chief of SLORC. We also have to pay 200 Ks per month for porter fees and we have to send six people every month as porters. If you can't go when your turn comes, you have to pay 7,000 Ks. We also have to pay 90 Ks each month as a "village development fund".

Now SLORC is constructing a "telephone exchange" station at our village, so we have to pay 300 Ks every month for this [*per family*]. We had to start paying this money in January 1995, and we still have to pay it. [*Note: the telephones will only be available to the military and their supporters.*] The village LORC also collected 1,000 Ks from each family and 2,000 Ks from each businessman [*small traders*] for reconstructing the village school. SLORC soldiers from LIB 401 came and took the raw rubber belonged to the villagers by force when it was ready to be sold. The villagers whose rubber was stolen went to the SLORC village head and told him what the soldiers had done, but he took no action.

Now SLORC IBs 267 and 269 are constructing their new bases between Tha Bye Chaung and Ze Lone villages [in Tavoy Township]. Our village has to provide them with forced labourers for this every 15 days in rotation. If a person can't go when it is his turn, he has to give 1,500 Ks to SLORC village headman.

The District and Township SLORC officials are planning to build a dam on the Maung Mei Shaung River, very close to our village. Their plan is to get hydro-electric power. They finished their feasibility studies in April. French engineers included in the survey team. According to their survey group, Maung Mei Shaung, Ye Waing, Kyat Inn, Kaung Taing Pyin, Kan Koo, Daing Chaung and Chaung Oo Doh villages, along with thousands of people's farms and orchards, will all be covered by water. The people in all these villages have already been told by the District and Township officers that they will not get any compensation for the loss of their property.

Interview: 104-HRV: Livelihood, Slavery, Detention, Torture

Name : Ko Than Htun
 Age: 37
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with three children
 Occupation: Fisherman
 Address : Thayetchaung Township, Tenasserim Division

Interviewed: 2 July 1995

Source: KHRG

[*Ko Than Htun was taken as a porter for SLORC's major rainy season offensive against the KNU's 4th Brigade area.*]

I was arrested by village LORC authorities and police on 4 June 1995 while I was ploughing in my field. Then I was handed over to LIB 404 from Thayetchaung. The other villagers and I who got arrested spent four days at the LIB 404 base. We were not allowed to go outside and we were guarded. Altogether there were more than 500 porters. We left Thayetchaung on 9 June. I had to carry a bag containing about three tinfulls [50 kg] of rice. I served 22 days as a porter.

Porters had to carry about 25-30 viss [40-48 kg] of ammunition or supplies. The rice [to eat] was not sufficient and if we could not walk or carry, the soldiers beat us. I saw some porters who were beaten and left along the path. Two days before escaping, I was suffering from fever so I fell down with my rice sack. For a moment, I couldn't wake up. But the soldiers from LIB 404 said that I was faking, and I was kicked. Being a porter for the SLORC column was, I think, the same as being in the hell. That's why all the porters are always thinking about escape.

My friend Maung Myint and I ran together. We are from the same village. After that it took me five days to get here to the Karen office. Along the way we couldn't get any rice. Two days after our escape, we met five other [escaped] porters and joined with them. The following day, we reached a place where we could see that LIB 404 had stopped for a rest and then left. At that place, Maung Myint was wounded by a land mine. His left leg was blown off from the knee down. We carried him and tried to save him but two days later, before we reached the Karen office, he died.

All our lives under BSPP [Burma Socialist Programme Party, Ne Win's pre-1988 dictatorship] and SLORC, we have served as "volunteers", operations porters, or emergency porters, and then we have to pay "voluntary funds" and porter fees every month to the village LORC. So living from day to day is very difficult, and people do not like SLORC but we are afraid of them. They can put you in jail without trial. Now my situation is better, and I thank the [Karen] authorities here for helping and treating us as friends.

Interview: 105-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour,

[The following is summarised from an interview with a schoolteacher from a SLORC school in Tavoy District which was conducted on 21 March 1995.]

Source: KHRG

I am a primary school principal. My salary is 1,150 Ks per month. Deductions from

this are 90.80 Ks for the insurance policy, 10 Ks for miscellaneous fund, and 2 Ks for pension, a total of 102.80 Ks. Sometimes there is also an “emergency fund” they collect whenever they need it. We have to withdraw our salary in Tavoy. It has been three months since I have withdrawn my salary because I took a loan of 6,000 Ks from the Tavoy Loan Association [*a government-run enterprise*]. The interest rate is 5% per month. I have six members in my family, so my salary is not enough to support them and that’s why I had to take a loan. Now the district educational officer has sent an order through the township officer that we have to do overtime teaching. The students have to pay 30 Ks each per month for this [*but this money goes to the authorities, not the teachers*].

There are 150 students in my school and three teachers — it is not enough teachers. The school was built by the villagers with their own money. It is made of bamboo with a leaf roof. It is not so good in the rain. We reported this matter many times to the education authorities, yet the school is just as you see it now. We have no books, the students have to buy them from the market. Usually, only about 80 to 100 of the 150 students are at school. The main reason some are absent is that their parents are poor. Some people live by having an orchard, some live by dry cultivation of paddy. Aside from the government staff [*only a few people*], other villagers have to go to work on the railway construction. Some students have to stay at home while their parents go to do the labour, and some have to go themselves if their parents are sick. No excuse can be given. Some students are also absent because they do not have enough rice to bring for lunch.

We open our school every day, but whenever the SLORC troops enter the village our school is closed because the villagers have to flee porter-chasing. We have no plan to repair our school because the villagers are already weary of porter fees and railway construction. They have trouble with finances and also with their time. Therefore, we have decided not to repair our school this year.

Interview: 106-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Slavery, Displacement, Torture, Refugee, Women, Child

Name :	Maung Kyi
Age:	32
Sex :	Male
Ethnicity:	Burman
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married to a Karen Christian and then converted to Christianity
Occupation:	Fisherman
Address :	Ye Bu village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed:	17 May 1995
Source:	KHRG

I've been here [*the refugee camp*] for more than 20 days. We faced so many difficulties because they always asked for free labour, that's why I'm here. They're building the railway so we have to send "volunteer" workers every day. Although our families are very poor, we have to pay many taxes. We have to work every day just to eat on that day, that's why we can't pay their taxes anymore. Pay or not pay they don't care, you still have to work. When we go we have to take our own food, pay our own money for transport and everything. The problems for our families — food, taxes and everything — are all increasing.

In our area there is a mobile column of SLORC. They demand tax from every village because they say they are providing security for the area. And when they rest in the village they say the villagers has to give them money for their food. They come very often, all the time, several times a week. When they are in the village, if you have to go to your farm or orchard they would not let you go. They don't allow us to go to our orchards, but they stay in the orchards and take all the fruits — betelnuts and all kinds of things. Some of them trade the fruit for alcohol, some sell it and when they get money they make a big party for themselves. At the time to harvest the fruits they just go to the orchards, and they tell all the villagers, "You're not allowed to come here because our troops are deployed here." No other reason. Then when they leave they take everything with them. When they come into the village they demand chickens, pigs, ducks, everything, and they just shoot them with slingshots. They do not care about the owner. When they want to abuse us, they accuse us of co-operating with KNU. Then they beat us and kick us. We face so many difficulties. When they come they ask for people, they are not there, instead they are in the fields or orchards or in the stream to get fish because the people have such trouble getting a living. But the soldiers say if they are not there then they have gone to contact the insurgent groups, and then when any person comes back the following day he receives beatings, blows and kicks from SLORC. This year at harvest time they beat 10 of us at once. They came and called us one by one to come to them, then they asked, "Where did you go? Where did you stay?". One started beating and kicking, then the others all joined in. For five minutes, some hit us with the rifle butts, some kicked us with their combat boots and some punched us with their fists. People who were hit with the rifle butts suffered the worst. Their flesh was split. People who were kicked with boots and hit with fists were bruised and swelling up. This has happened several times. That time it was LIB 409, but LIB 403 also comes to our village.

Our village has to go work on the railway. As there is a mobile column in our area, we also have to keep three people on standby for use by this column. They have to cook, find firewood and carry water for the column. When we're on this duty they don't think of giving us time to rest. We have to carry water, then as soon as we get back they send us for firewood, then when we get back they look at their watch and say, "Now it's time to cook." If we don't finish in time or don't get back from wherever they've sent us [*as messengers*] on time, then sometimes they beat us and punch us. We never get a rest, and we also have to take our own food for the day.

Every time the column comes into the village, if they ask for “50” then every house has to pay 50 Ks. Now, we have to pay it almost every week. Moreover, we also have to pay labour fees. Some of the villagers cannot go for railway labour because they are ill. Then if the soldiers say that will cost 3,000 Ks then we have to pay 3,000 Ks to the mobile column. Whenever they find young girls along their way they take them by force. I don’t know what they do to them because I never saw it with my own eyes.

We have to give three people as standby porters, rotating every five days. We have to do this for both LIBs 409 and 403. We have a village head and he gives us a list of who will go on standby for which days. Suppose a husband has to go work on the railway and it is his turn, then if he has a son his son will have to go as a standby porter; if not, his wife or daughters have to go.

At the railway, first we had to clear the forest — cut down the trees and dig out the stumps. Later, we had to carry the stones that they brought on trucks and put them all along the route. The work is very hard. Then we had to carry logs [*sleepers*] to make the railway. We had to cut down trees near our village to make sleepers — they even made us cut down our durian trees to make sleepers. The railway is about five miles from our village. There are 60 houses in our village and 20 people have to go for one month at a time. It is arranged by the village head. We have to take our own food. We have to start at 6:00 a.m. and we can only stop at 6:00 p.m. At 12:00 noon we have time for lunch, but as soon as we finish our lunch they blow the whistle and we have to go back to our assigned places. The youngest people there are eight or nine years old, and the eldest are over 70, nearly 80. If you are sick when your time comes you have to send someone else from your family. If you can’t, you have to hire someone to go in your place. There is no way out! You just have to find some way to go. I’ve been there three times myself. We built small shelters by a stream to sleep. We were always guarded. At night they did not let anyone go anywhere, and in the daytime they always had sentries during working hours. Nobody tries to escape. If you try to escape, the following morning they send an order to the village head to pay a fine.

People are punished for not working well. The soldiers say, “You didn’t come here to rest or to get ill. You came here to work. Get on with your work!” They beat and kick people. Some people have worked there a long time and they are elderly and tired, so they just try to rest for a minute, but the soldiers come yelling, “You’re not here to rest! Get on with your work!” and beat and kick them. This happens all the time. Even me, I’ve received their blows. Sometimes I was too tired so I tried to sit down and rest. Then three or four times they came and punched and kicked me. Sometimes they hit very quick, pa-pa-pa-pa-pa! I didn’t know how many punches I got. Even if you cannot work after that, you have to work. I saw some people seriously injured from beatings by the soldiers, because they hit people on the head with rifle butts and their heads were cut open. When you go to the railway you have to take some medicines, because if you get sick they never give you any. If you are too sick

to work anymore someone has to go work in your place. LIB 403 is in charge of the work. There are about 4,000 villagers from our area working on the railway line in Yebyu Township. Every village has to send people according to SLORC's demands.

We'll have to work on this railway until it is finished. I can't guess how long it will take. Eight or nine people's orchards in Yebyu Township have already been destroyed for the railway. Pati Saw Da Thay, K'Plah Wah, U Ya Yee, U Kalah, U Pe Thein, and Saw Pay Way from my village lost all, their orchards were completely destroyed. [*Villagers often have fields a few miles from the village, as in this case.*] They got nothing for it. Because of that some of them fled to the border, some went to stay with their relatives in other villages. There used to be more than 80 houses in our village, now just over 30 are left. The inhabitants were Karen and Burmese, no other groups. I don't know where all of them have gone, but about seven families have arrived here. Our family took three days to get here with our small children. Now we've decided to stay here in the camp.

Interview: 107-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Slavery, Detention, Torture, Refugee, Women

Name : Nai Ba San
 Age: 43
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with seven children (age 6 to 22 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Paukpinkwin village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 5 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

I arrived here [*the refugee camp*] in February [1995] because of the oppression by the Burmese soldiers. I don't want to stay in Burma, so I came here with my family. First I worked on the railway, and then while I was working there the soldiers arrested me to be a porter. The soldiers came to our village and took the people to work on the railway. They took 20 people for five days, then they took another 20 people for the next five days. If a villager did not want to go, he had to pay money to the soldiers. They beat people who did not go with sticks and guns, and if people did not go, the soldiers arrested them and held them for two or three days, then when the villagers went and gave money they were released. The railway is very near our village, so we slept in our village while we worked there. We worked from 6:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., then we got a rest and then finished work at 3:00 p.m. We had to dig and carry the ground to make an embankment. We had to carry the dirt about 30 metres. We didn't receive food from the soldiers. I had to bring food and tools from my house. The soldiers didn't pay us either. LIB 410 was on the railway.

There were 10 soldiers guarding 20 people. Sometimes they beat us. They always had a stick. I was beaten. While I was carrying dirt, the soldiers kicked me with their boots and I fell down. I was hurt. I also saw people punched, beaten with sticks and sometimes with rifle butts. I heard that some people died because of beatings, but I didn't see it. Some people got very sick, but they didn't get any medicine. They could go home and buy some medicine in their village. Then as soon as they were getting better, they were called to work again. When I was sick, the soldiers didn't say anything but they came and checked me every day, and when I was better they called me back to work on the railway.

They took both men and women. There were also women working on the railway. They didn't take children, but they took elderly men and women. People all went with their children. Sometimes women with babies were allowed to come back to the village, but their husbands had to stay at the work-site the whole day. In our group, there were 20 people led by a Buddhist monk. We had to work for five days, then we could rest two days, then work for five days again. Then two weeks later they changed the workers.

In February, while I was working on the railway, a soldier came and arrested me to be a porter. He said, "Follow me!" They took five of us. I had to follow the soldiers through the villages for 10 days, carrying rice. Those soldiers were from LIB 410. In the villages, when the soldiers stole chickens and pigs we had to carry those too. I carried continuously and it was heavy, over 20 viss [32 kg]. The soldiers ate the chickens and only gave us a little bit. We didn't get proper food. I got sick with malaria. They said to me, "You are lazy!", and beat me. They kicked me with their boots. I saw them hit other porters on the neck with sticks. They shot them in the back, shoulders, and legs with slingshots, and beat their legs with sticks. Some porters were badly hurt, but later they could walk again. After 10 days, I came back to my village. They called five more people to go as porters, and they called me to work on the railway again. I didn't go. The soldiers arrested me and took me to their camp. They accused me of being a Mon soldier. They wanted money from me. I was there for three days. Then my daughter and my wife had to sell their earrings to get money, and my wife gave the soldiers 1,500 Ks so they released me. Then I fled and came here. This place is better than my village — there are no Burmese soldiers here. In my village there are always Burmese soldiers, so I couldn't stay.

Last year it was worse, but this year is still not good — last year the villagers had to work 10 days without rest, then they changed the people. This year we work for five days, then get two days to rest, then five days more, then they change the people. Last year I had to work about seven weeks on the railway. I also had to pay taxes on my farm: four baskets of paddy per acre. SLORC gets everything for free from the villagers, and whenever they want money the villagers have to pay. I don't think this railway is good. I don't agree with it. By the time it's finished, the soldiers will have taken everything from the villagers for themselves. I don't agree at all.

Interview: 108-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Slavery, Detention, Torture, Refugee

Name : Nai Lon
 Age: 33
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with four children (age 3 to 12 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Paukpinkwin village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 4 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

I came here [*the refugee camp*] two months ago because of the Burmese troops. I had to be a porter and I had to work on the railway, and if I didn't want to go when they called me I had to give them money. There are 400 houses in our village. Some people had to work on the railway line and some had to cut wood while the others had to be porters. Last year, I worked on the railway for one month. After each 10 days of work, I had two-day rest and I could sleep at home. Since then, I had to work for a whole year cutting wood for them. I had to work all the time, every day. I had no time to work for my family, leaving us nothing to eat. That's why we came here.

I worked for one month, then I could take only two days' rest and then they called me again to cut the wood. It was valuable hardwood. We were ordered to cut ironwood, all hardwoods, all wood with an expensive price. I don't know all the names in Burmese. Sometimes they [*the soldiers*] used it to build their houses and sometimes they sold it. We had to cut the wood into planks. After we finished cutting it, the soldiers took it away on carts. I didn't know where they took it. There were six people in each group who were cutting wood. There were many groups. Some people had to cut the trees down, and others had to cut the planks. I saw 60 people working in the same area. Sometimes it was near the railway, sometimes far. We had to do it for LIB 404. They have moved now. They didn't give us anything, no salary. When I couldn't go to work, I had to give them money. I had to give 200 Ks per day. Every evening, all the workers had to go to the soldiers' camp and they told us what we had to do the next day and how. If we were cutting trees near our village we could go sleep at home, but sometimes it was far from the village and we had to sleep under the trees. I had to bring rice, fish paste and salt from my home.

Once while I was cutting the wood, some other soldiers [from IB 104] came and took me as a porter. I was a porter for 20 days, carrying their food, rice, etc. We went many places in the jungle. In villages they took everything they could — chickens, pigs, etc. When they disliked a villager, they beat him with a stick. When they met people outside the villages, they arrested them to get more porters. Sometimes they beat them with a stick, so hard that they had to be hospitalised.

After my time as a porter, I had to go right back to cut wood for them — no rest.

Once when I was sick and couldn't go to work, the Burmese soldiers arrested me, accused me of being a Mon soldier and put me in jail. They beat me at my home and tied me up, then they took me outside the village and hit me again, with sticks and guns. They hit me at the head. Ever since the beatings, my brain has not been well, even now. They hit me many, many times on the head and on the neck with a G3 rifle butt. They also hit me in the stomach, and they hit my legs with my own knife while I was tied up. I wasn't bleeding, but it hurt a lot. After the beatings, they held me at their camp for two days and three nights. Each night they beat me more and asked questions. They asked, "Are you a Mon soldier?" Then they said, "You have a gun in your house, so you are a Mon soldier!" I have a hunting-rifle, but I have a licence for it. I am just a villager. But they also accused me of having a walkie-talkie. Then on the third day, my family gave them 15,000 Ks and the soldiers released me.

I went back home but my brain was not well. I felt like a madman. I treated myself with jungle medicine, then after about one month I felt better. Then I came here. I walked four days from my village to arrive here with my family.

Interview: 109-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Slavery, Torture, Women, Execution

Name :	Ko Kyaw Thein
Age:	20
Sex :	Male
Ethnicity:	Burman
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Single, six brothers and sisters, both parents deceased
Address :	Insein Town, outskirts of Rangoon
Interviewed:	3 June 1995
Source:	KHRG

[Ko Kyaw Thein was a private in the SLORC Army for three years before deserting in late 1994.]

I was in the army for three years. I was a private. I got 650 Ks per month. Soon I was to receive 700 Ks. I had only monastic education as a novice. My parents died before I joined the army. When they died I stayed with my grandparents. They were farmers. I was very sad and depressed after my parents died, so I ran away from home [*apparently in 1991 at the age of 16, though he is not sure*] and I met my friend from the army at Insein railway station. He advised me. He said many good things about the army, and that I would get a gun and a uniform. He told me many stories about the soldier's life, and it was all very exciting. He took me to IB 16 at

Kyo Gone in Rangoon. I had to wait two or three months until they had enough recruits to start the training. The training was four months and a half, and altogether there were 251 of us. We learned hand-to-hand fighting, how to use small arms, and we had demonstrations of heavy artillery. At first they tortured us, and then it got lighter. I couldn't sleep well. But the training was only part of it — we also had to do labour at a rubber plantation. The owner gave money for our work but we didn't receive it. They [*the officers*] took it all. If we were late or could not report for work, we were beaten, usually about 20 or 30 times on the hips with a stick. Sometimes a sergeant beat us himself, sometimes he asked the his men to do it.

After the training, I was posted at LIB 409 at Ala Chaung in Yebyu Township. When I arrived there, they gave us a refresher course on small arms. I was at the camp for three months, and we had to do hard work like building barracks. After that we had to go to the front-line two or three times. There were two major clashes, one at Nat Ein Taung and another at Kawza near Paukpinkwin, against combined groups of Mon, Tavoyan, and Burmese student soldiers.

In the camp we had sentry and patrol duty, and duty to build roads and bridges. My group's duty was to collect porters for the army. We had to collect porters not only in the villages but also those on their way to work or in the jungle. The officer ordered us to collect every man we met, so we did. We collected only men, no women. We had to fill a quota of porters, so we often had to collect elderly over 40 to meet the number we needed. If they didn't want to go we beat them. If we didn't bring back enough porters, our officers would beat us. Therefore even though we didn't want to beat the porters, we had to do it. Usually there were eight or nine of us and we had to collect 20 or 30 porters whenever the army needed them, which was very often. I was in the group to collect the porters while the duty of other soldiers was to make them work. The porters are forced to do very hard work in the camp, on the roads and road construction work. We had to force the villagers to work. Almost all the villagers were Mon.

Yes, we collected workers for the Ye-Tavoy railway. If we didn't bring enough workers, our officers beat us. They kicked us and ordered us to collect one person in each family, regardless of their sex or ages. That was last year, in the rainy season [*June-October 1994*], near Paukpinkwin village. Those people had to work under the heavy rain, digging and carrying the ground to make the embankment. When the weather was dry, they smoothed the embankment and repaired it. They had to clear and cut the trees and bamboo, causing them very tired. Sometimes workers were bitten by snakes, and others hurt their hands and legs. But there was no medical treatment for them. They were just allowed to go home. Those who could afford to go to hospital would not die. One third of them were women. We didn't collect children. But the children couldn't stay at home alone and had to come along. As the workers couldn't go home, they built shelters for themselves near the work site. They had to work there for two or three months. They were replaced by people from other villages. They rotated. First one village, then another, and after all the villages

in an area had been taken then we started with the first again. My duty was only collecting workers. Guarding them was the duty of other soldiers. I was staying in a camp near Kyauk Ka Din. For the villages far from the railway line, they sent orders to the headmen to send workers. For the nearby villages, we had to collect the villagers ourselves. Very often, I beat and punched people if they didn't want to go. Sometimes I kicked them with my boots, sometimes I punched. I ran away at the end of rainy season. But the workers were continued to be collected. They will be collected until the railway is finished.

Each day we got bean soup and fish-paste for every meal. There was enough rice, but bean soup and fish-paste were scarce [*the battalion receives much better rations than this, but they are generally taken or sold by the officers and NCOs*]. On Sundays we could get passes to go visit other places. But the officer never gave us leave. In three years, I never saw my family. I contacted them by sending letter, so they knew where I was. The officers didn't let us listen to the radio. If anyone bought a radio, they would seize it and pay back the cost. From our salary they deducted money for uniforms, boots, hats, belts, etc. So sometimes I received only 15 Ks or 5 Ks per month. They deducted so many things. I didn't even understand what some of them were! The junior soldiers had to do everything for the senior soldiers. If we refused, we were punched. Sometimes I got punched, and sometimes beaten with a stick. Sometimes, the beating cause the soldiers to have a broken nose, a black eye or broken teeth. Sometimes we were punched in the ribs and we couldn't walk for two or three days. The soldiers also beat the villagers severely every time they didn't do their work properly.

In the front-line, if soldiers were seriously wounded and there was no chance to send them back, then they were shot dead. The other soldiers carried his gun and equipment back. Each section [*6-10 soldiers*] had one or two porters and the Artillery Company had many. Sometimes during the fighting we were worried for the porters because they were in the wrong position. So we called them. But usually they did not come because they were afraid of the fighting. Then some soldiers punched them and beat them with rifle butts. Some porters were even beaten to death. I saw this and I did this too. Once I told a porter to stay with me, but he disobeyed and ran away. So I beat him with my rifle butt and ordered him to stay beside me. I beat him on his shoulder. It was not serious. He was about 23 years old.

The officers always gave a lot of heavy duties and they usually punched and beat us. I didn't want to collect porters or workers for the railway anymore. The officers didn't even give them rice, oil and salt. Moreover, they got neither medical treatment nor money. For example, the labourers hurt their legs, their hands and their heads from digging the ground, but they were not treated. They received nothing. So, we felt pity for them and we didn't want to collect them. Sometimes we discussed it. Then we decided to run away. There were three of us. Then at the battalion base, more joined in the discussion. A sergeant said that he was going to join a revolutionary group and we agreed with him. Altogether six of us ran away, but two were captured.

Four of us arrived here. It was very difficult. We escaped very secretly and we chose a secret route. But we had nothing to eat on the way except raw banana-stems. We surrendered in a Mon village. The villagers sent us to the Tavoy district office and then here. We got information that one of our two friends who got caught was shot dead and the other was put in jail. At first when we ran away, we were very afraid to meet the Mon soldiers because our officers had threatened us. They said, "If you try to run away you will meet the Mon soldiers and they will kill you all slowly with a bamboo string. The surrounding villages are all full of Mon soldiers." We escaped from our camp at the end of the rainy season last year [about September/October 1994]. I despised collecting porters. It is very inhumane. I hated that. But I was ordered to do it by the officers. My commander was Col Kyaw Zan Hla. He is Arakanese. My company commander was Capt Han Maung. I was in Coy 1. Now I have no worry because of being here. I will stay here and serve the PDF [People's Democratic Front, a small armed opposition group]. I am a soldier here, but my duty here is just sentry duty. I want to fight them.

Interview: 110-HRV: Forced Labour, Torture, Execution, Detention, Judicial, Refugee

Name : Nai Win Hlaing
 Age: 20
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : An island in Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 1 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

Before the railway, I was in Moulmein jail as a prisoner. I don't remember the exact date I went in, but I spent one year and six days in the jail. I was a Mon soldier. I was arrested in my family's house in my village on an island by the police. I was visiting my family. While I was eating, they arrived and arrested me. When we reached the police station, they beat me. They made a fire around me and burned me, then they filled a plastic bag with water, put my head in it and tied it around my neck. They beat me with an iron bar everywhere except on my head, especially on my back. They beat me every night for three days. At night time, they always came and beat me. One time, for three hours! There were many policemen. Then I confessed that I was a Mon soldier and they stopped beatings. They put me in the lockup. They made me sign some papers and forms, then they took me to court. I was sentenced to four years' imprisonment and they sent me to Moulmein prison. I was sentenced under Section 17/1 [Unlawful Association Act]. I had a lawyer who said a lot to defend me but the judge didn't listen to him. The judge said, "This case is a serious

case". Then he sentenced me to four years. He was not from the military.

In the jail I was put in a big room with about 100 prisoners. We got one plate of rice for one meal. If we said it wasn't enough, they shouted, "Go and die!" We slept at 9:00 p.m. on the concrete floor, with no pillow. Nobody could stand up except for the toilet, and then you had to shout for permission. Each prisoner was allowed seven bowlfuls of water to bathe, with no soap. There were a few political prisoners, but mostly criminals. They mixed us together. We all wore white prison clothes — white shirt and white longyi. We had to work in the morning and afternoon, making pathways inside the jail, making baskets and growing vegetables. They also sent some prisoners to work in Mandalay. The guards beat the prisoners, especially for fighting. Also, as soon as new prisoners came, the guards ordered other prisoners to beat them. But there was no more beatings on the following day.

They took me to the [Ye-Tavoy] railway before the end of last rainy season — maybe September [1994]. They took 250 of us by train. We were kept separate from the passengers, with chains on our legs, and they locked the carriage. We were sent to Ko-Mile [9-mile] labour camp. When we arrived, we were the only ones there. They made us dig the ground and prepare it for the railroad. The trees were already cut down but the railroad [embankment] was badly damaged, so we had to rebuild it. We were not with any villagers. We worked in chains. We wore them the whole day and night. It was not possible to take them off. They were attached to our waist. We had to walk slowly. [*They are heavy metal leg shackles which lock around each ankle, with a short chain between, and are also attached to a metal ring encircling the waist — worn constantly, they cause fatigue and friction sores.*] I have scars from the chains. We had to start work at 7:00 a.m. after having breakfast with boiled rice. From 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon we got a break for lunch, then we worked until 4:00 p.m. We got no water except at lunch time. Every lunch we got beans with rice and vegetables in the evening. But it was not good. In the evening we could rest. We were allowed to go to the toilet, but only in front of the guards. There was a latrine. For cooking the guards selected five prisoners, and they didn't work on the railway, they just did the cooking.

We worked every day, except one day a week when we had to clean the camp compound. Sick prisoners could rest but I never got sick. There were about five guards: two soldiers and three policemen. All the prisoners were from Moulmein jail. There were about 10 political prisoners like me among the 250, but there were a lot more in Moulmein Jail. These 10 had all belonged to revolutionary groups and were sentenced to three or four years. They were all Mons. Other types of political prisoners [*he means those who speak or write against SLORC*] have been heavily sentenced for many years, so they are not allowed to go outside the jail [*prisoners with heavy sentences are generally not allowed to go outside for forced labour, in fear of their escape*]. The prisoners at the railway were all 20 to about 30 years old. The guards didn't beat us, they ordered the warder to do it. He had no chains. He beat us a lot, but he had no choice. If he didn't beat us, the guards would beat him.

I was beaten a lot, on the body with a cane stick. Five blows at a time, then stop, then again five blows, almost every day. Whenever anyone did anything wrong, everyone was beaten. Sometimes the warder was also beaten by the guards. Some prisoners were beaten very severely so they were allowed to rest on the following day. Then soon afterwards they died. Five prisoners died on the way to the camp from beatings. Three died of sickness at the camp. Even prisoners who got sick, if they could move they had to work. If they couldn't move, they were allowed to rest. Prisoners who got sick were treated, but I don't know what medicine they gave them. All the prisoners who got sick died. Nobody survived. The doctor gave them the medicine. There was a doctor in the clinic in the village nearby — but not a very good one! Most of the sick died on the way to Ye Hospital. And their bodies were brought back to the camp.

Two men tried to escape, but the guards saw them and chased them. One was captured in the forest and the other reached a village but the Karen villagers sent him back. The guards ordered the men to lie down and then made five prisoners walk on their bodies. Then they took them to their office and put them in the stocks [*mediaeval-style leg stocks of wood or bamboo*], and beat them everywhere, including the head. When they were done, both of them had broken arms and were unconscious, but they didn't die. Then they were left there in the sun for more than one month. Each night, they were moved and slept with the other prisoners. They didn't receive any treatment, even for the broken arms. They just put some leaves on their heads where they were bleeding. They were about 30 years old. They were not political prisoners. At night, the guards ordered us to sleep close beside those two [*to prevent another escape attempt*]. More than 100 prisoners were sleeping in a building which was the size of this rice barn, with two windows. There was a guard inside and other guards outside, and there were three fences of sharpened bamboo sticks and one of barbed wire.

On a Sunday [*their day off railway work*] while we were working in the vegetable garden, the guards took nine of us to carry water. It was just after lunch time, and the police guards were drinking alcohol. We were outside the camp. The guards told us not to run and we said, "Yes". Then they said we could eat the layer of rice crust from the bottom of the pots, so I went to get it. The kitchen was also outside the fences. I saw that the guards there were sleeping. The prisoner-cook asked me, "What are you looking for?" I said, "I want to pick some jackfruit for the meal". He said, "Good — go and get them." The guards were all sleeping or drinking. A guard told me to take off my slippers and shirt, so I did and laid them down [*as a guarantee to prevent escape*]. Then I went into the jungle and ran away. Just 13 days before that, the order had come from Rangoon to remove our chains because it was too difficult to work in them. So I had no chains. A lot of people were trying to escape at that time. I heard that two others tried to escape that day after me, but they were recaptured. I knew the way so that I arrived at a village. That was three months ago. I'm not sure what I should do. Maybe I'll go and report to my regiment again, but I'm not sure.

Interview: 111-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Torture, Execution, Refugee, Women, Child

Name : Mi Ong Son
Age: 23
Sex : Female
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with one child (age 2 years)
Occupation: Farm labourer
Address : Mockkanin village, Ye Township, Mon State
Interviewed: 19 May 1995
Source: KHRG

We arrived here [*the refugee camp*] two weeks ago because we couldn't stand the SLORC's oppression any more. Both my husband and I had to work on the railway. When my husband was working on the railway he was ill and he couldn't work, so I had to go in his place. I went once but my husband went three times. Altogether we had to work two months. I was working there in February. I had to carry rocks and dirt on my head in pans. I had to carry it about 50 yards, up to the top of embankment. I carried my son [*two years old*] on my back. The men broke the rocks. At first there were only men. But many men got sick because of hard work, so they had to ask their wives to help. Every woman had to go if her husband could not go or was sick. Some girls I saw there were only 6 to 10 years old [*most likely the six-year-olds had come along with their parents*], and there were women about 60 years old. Some women were pregnant, and some even delivered babies there because they weren't allowed to go home until their work was finished. The children also had to carry the dirt, but a little less.

There are about 2,000 houses in my village. It is a big village. Every fifty families had to send someone else for each rotation [*two weeks*] up to a period of three months. The headman collected the people. I had to take the train to Ye [*her village is north of Ye*], then the car and then on foot to the work-site. The journey took about four hours by train, then two hours by car and 24 hours' walk. The train and the car were free of charges. At the railway construction site, each family was assigned about 50 yards [*of embankment to build*]. It had to be about two times the height of this house [*i.e. about 8 m*]. They gathered three or four families to work together. They could only go home when it was finished. After that they had to go work at another place. They can rest at home for about 10 days, then they have to go to another place.

We got no salary or food. Every month or every two weeks, our families sent food for us. We had to make shelters to sleep in. If we didn't make one, we'd have to sleep on the ground. We had to use our own tools. The soldiers were spread along the railway, guarding. My husband was beaten. They hit him in the back with the

wooden part of the gun. They beat him because he was ill. They didn't allow people to rest. They ordered the labourers to work all the time. Everyone who was sick was beaten. One woman and one man died. The soldiers beat them because they were sick and they could not work. The woman was about 60 years old. The sick got no medicine. They had to buy it themselves. They were not allowed to go home. The soldiers teased the women, especially the young girls. One girl was raped. She was 24 years old, from Gom Sai village. She died. They killed her. I didn't know her name. That happened while I was working there. There were also about a hundred prisoners from Moulmein. They were in chains. They broke rocks and carried rocks.

Lots of people tried to escape. If they were caught, they were beaten. While we were working, I ran out of food and ran away. I was tired and hungry so that I went into the forest near the railway. The soldiers caught me and forced me to work again. Later, I escaped back to my village and met my husband who was sick, and we fled together. We left our house and came here. [*She came together with her sister, 22, who was also forced to work on the railway.*]

As a farm worker I made 50 Ks per day. If you can't go work on the railway, you have to pay 500 Ks per day. I don't see any benefit to this railway.

Interview: 112-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Refugee

Name : Ko Hla Shwe
 Age: 33
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with three children (age 16 months, 3 and 14 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Sin Swe village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 1 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

I served as a village headman for two years. The villagers chose me to be a headman. But now I have run away from my village. I arrived here [*the refugee camp*] about 20 days ago. I am going to tell you why. They demanded a lot of things from the villages in our Min Tha village group, so we couldn't pay anymore. We asked them to reduce it but they refused. I felt a lot of pity for my villagers. They demanded money for porter fees and forced labour fees. In short, we are now paying money to buy their longyis [*sarongs*]. For our own families, it is not much. People in our village group have to work a lot for them. There are six villages in Min Tha village group — Min Tha is the biggest. The orders come from Min Tha camp [LIB 406], and we must always follow the orders. They demand 20 people for labour. This is for railway construction. There were about 30 houses in our village. Excluding the

elderly and the very poor, there are about 20 houses. So each of these 20 houses has to send one person for forced labour. You have to pay 2,500 Ks for every week you fail to show up. This is not just one day's work. [*The labour is rotating, so each house has to provide one person constantly.*] So we have no way to eat, no way to make money, but still we must go for their labour. It is very difficult.

When people had no money, they borrowed from others. But we couldn't borrow any anymore. We had no more gold. We could only give our clothes or pots to the soldiers as a deposit. Some people sold their pots. The soldiers said, "If you can't contribute labour, give money. If you can't give money, find a way. You must solve it by yourself, but you must give money." If not, they arrest us. They sent many [*order*] letters. Every week. One month we received a demand for our village to give 135,000 Ks. I can't remember all the smaller demands. Each year, we had to give them 155,000 Ks for the food supply of their camp alone. Moreover, we also had to pay uncounted amount of money for construction costs. The headmen of all six villages got these orders through the village group.

The railway is three or four miles from the village. We had to send 15 people each week. As there were 30 houses in our village, we sent people from 15 houses for the first week and another 15 the following week. When it rained heavily, they stopped. When the sun shined, they started again. We have been gathering people for the railway over the past two years. Last year they demanded 10 labourers, but 15 for this year. But the money is the same. If we can't send a man, we have to pay 2,500 Ks per week, the same as before. The places we have to work are close to 7-mile, 8-mile, and 9-mile villages. We had to dig and carry the ground. Now, the labourers have to sleep in huts which is as big as the rice barn here [*20 ft x 40 ft*]. There are more than 10 barns. As almost 100 labourers have to sleep in each barn, it is quite crowded. We worked. But the following day the rain usually destroyed our work.

Now nobody lives in Sin Swe anymore — maybe only one or two households are still living there. We couldn't bear their demands, which have been continuous for the past five years. They don't care about us. Wherever they go, their only duty is to make demands. As we couldn't give them anymore, we moved. Even after the families left, their demands remained the same. Then when we couldn't give, they would arrest and punish us. And the families left one after another. Most people destroyed their houses themselves and gave the materials to others. Otherwise, the soldiers destroy it if nobody is left in a house. For the future, I think it will be no better for us. Month after month, they just make more and more demands. If the situation improves, I will go back. For now, staying here is the only way to survive. Ten families from my village are already here [*in the refugee camp*].

Interview: 113-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Refugee, Torture, Child, Women, Displacement

Name : Nai Win Maung
 Age: 58
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with three children (all died from illness more than 10 years ago)
 Occupation: Farm labourer
 Address : Du Ree village, Ye Township, Mon State
 Interviewed: 19 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

I came here because I couldn't stay there. I couldn't stand their torture and I couldn't pay all the porter fees and taxes for the railway. I came with my wife, about 20 days ago. I had to work on the railway in October, November, and also December [1994]. I had to work for two months and a half. I was breaking rocks and ground and carrying them, and levelling the way [*embankment*]. I worked from 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., then from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. After that, I got a rest. We had to pile the dirt, 20 armspans [*about 100 feet*] long and as high as this house. There were 24 of us. It took us two months and a half, then we could go home. I brought food from my village, and sometimes I had to buy some. Some tools were given by the soldiers and some, like baskets, we had to bring ourselves. We slept along the railway, under a shelter made with leaves. We had to build the shelters by ourselves. We had to build one shelter after another when we finished one section and moved to a new place. There were about 10,000 people working on the railway in that area.

The soldiers were deployed along the railway. They always guarded us in groups of 15 to 30. It is difficult to escape. They keep rotating. They came and checked us twice a day. I was not beaten because I worked all the time. But I saw other people were beaten up. Some people were beaten when they couldn't work due to sickness. I saw a man from Kot Dot village who was badly beaten. After they kicked him he couldn't work. But he was forced to work. He was hurt internally. He was about 20 years old. Some women had husbands who had gone to Thailand [*to find work*], so they were alone with their children and they had to go work on the railway. The youngest children were about 13 or 14 years old. The eldest were over 60. A lot of people got sick. Some died. When they were sick, they were provided with no food, no supplies and no medicine. If we needed medicine, we had to get it from our friends. The SLORC troops had medicine for themselves, not for us. They said, "If you can't work, no problem. You stay here until your duty is finished either way." Then the sick had to stay a longer time to finish their assignment. Pregnant women there also had to work, but not as hard as the men. I heard some delivered babies there, but that was at other places. I didn't see. When they were digging the

mountainside, some people died of a landslide while one man from Ye broke his back.

Some people escaped. They fled because they knew that they could never finish their job and as a consequence they would be subject to beatings. After they escaped, the soldiers made trouble for their village headman and their families. Therefore, people were afraid to flee because they have their belongings and their farms in their village. Since last year LIB 343 as well as two or three other battalions have come to our area. Mostly it is LIB 343 that supervises the labour for the railway construction. Sometimes they change the troops.

After I finished my work on the railway [*after December 1994*] I worked in my village. But we had to pay so many taxes, and I couldn't. Here if I need to go to the hospital I don't have to pay, and I receive rice. It is better than in the SLORC-controlled area.

Interview: 114-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Refugee, Torture, Child, Slavery, Women,

Name : Nai Tin Shwe
 Age: 64
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married, "I had 12 children, six are still alive but only four stay with me (age 14 to 33 years)"
 Occupation: Farm labourer
 Address : Damin Seik village, Ye Township, Mon State
 Interviewed: 19 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

I arrived here [*the refugee camp*] three weeks ago. I had to work on the railway for two months this year, and I had to pay for railway sleepers. We had to pay 200 Ks every month for other things as well. We had to pay all the time. The headman said, "If you can't pay, you can't stay here. We will take your house. You can go and stay wherever you want where you don't have to pay." That's why I came here, as I couldn't pay the money for the sleepers and other things, he said I couldn't stay in the village. If someone can pay he can stay in his house. But I couldn't, so I had to leave. I had nothing to bring — no blankets, no mosquito nets. I came with nothing. I came more than 20 days ago. My daughter, whose husband also had to work on the railway, came with me. Her husband couldn't get any money to live. My 14-year-old son came. I am 64 years old. I had to go and work at Mitaw Lah Gyi, Mitaw Lah Lay and Paukpinkwin. These places are close to Tavoy! [*i.e. far from his village; the villages mentioned are not all close to Tavoy, but villagers around his area use*

the expression "close to Tavoy!" to mean any place which is very far away.]

I worked from November until January — more than two months. The work site was so far away, I couldn't work the whole time until May. I couldn't carry. We had to carry dirt up to a height of 27 ft from the hole [*to build the embankment*]. It was too hard for an old man like me. They forced the prisoners to do it too. We couldn't dig the ground [*the ground can be rock hard in dry season*]. They dynamited the ground and we had to carry up the dirt. We had to work for the government, but with our own food. They sold one bowl [*about 2.5 kg, uncooked*] of old and bad rice for 15 Ks. We didn't receive any money from the government. They didn't beat me because I am old. But some young people were beaten very often. There were many elderly. Some were even older than me. There were also some women of my age. They collected anyone who could carry a basket of dirt. Even widows had to go work. Some people who couldn't go were forced to pay money to them. It was about 1,500 Ks per household. It led us facing so many difficulties. Some labourers were got malaria and died on the work-site. Last year at our work-site, four people were buried in the same hole because the ground collapsed on Kyaik Mei Ma Lok mountain. Last year, I also had to work hard. Normally, we had to work 15 days for each time. But this year we had to work for two months continuously.

Then in February and afterwards, they re-started the work and they took labourers again. But after 15 days, the people fled to their village because of fighting. All the work-sites had to close. The fighting was with Karen or Mon soldiers, I'm not sure. Maybe Mons. I didn't have to go that time. After that, I came to the border. Just before I left the village, every household had to pay 200 Ks per month. The money was to buy food for about 200 prisoners who were still working at the work-site. If I'd stayed there, I would have faced so many difficulties. I had to pay so many fees like porter fees, construction fees, and etc. I am an elderly, so I can't earn a lot. I had nothing to eat. That's why I had to leave. I lost my way during the trip. Some people guided me here.

Before it was worse because so many people had to go and work. This time they had troubles and they stopped. They already stopped, and I heard they won't work this year. They will probably start again at the beginning of coming dry season. I'm very happy that they closed the work-site this year. Otherwise we would be almost dead. It was really lucky that fighting started soon after they started the work. They [*the Mon or Karen soldiers*] came and opened fire for three or four nights, everyone fled and the work-site closed down. But now they [*SLORC*] ask for money. Even if we work very hard, we can't afford to pay. We don't even earn enough to eat. They took so many people as porters, even the elderly. People were released only after bribing them at the rate of 10,000 Ks. They take everything we earn. There is no reason to stay there any longer.

More than 10,000 people were taken as porters to Bo Mya's area [*far away for SLORC's offensives in the Manerplaw and Salween areas*]. They took about 20

from our village, and more than 500 in Ye Township. Some were captured while they were working on their farms. When I left the village, I still hadn't seen any of them come back yet. I think they are still in the jungle in Bo Mya's area. They even took the civil servants, like schoolteachers. They arrested elderly, and then their sons had to go in their place. Old or not, they don't care. They take everyone and force them to carry according to their strength. If someone can carry shells, he has to carry shells. If he can't carry shells, he has to carry rice. So many porters have died, but I didn't see it myself. The living conditions are very bad. We are never in peace.

Now I have heard that they will build a new railway in the dry season at Nat Ein Taung [*this is the gas pipeline route — it will not be a railway, but clearing for the pipeline. SLORC may try to cover up forced labour for the pipeline by pretending they are building a motorway or railway*]. We will have to go and work there also. It is a five-year project. If we have to go and work there, we will not be paid. We will have to buy our own food and go for 15 days each time. The headman told us they will build this new railway. He learned it from the higher ranking officers. There is a government order that the villagers will have to work on that new railway. It comes from their office. They will start clearing in the dry season [*November-May*]. For this, they will use bulldozers. These machines can clear everything, even the clumps of bamboo, everything! They can pull down big trees and take away clumps of bamboo very easily. [*Nai Tin Shwe had clearly only seen a bulldozer once or twice before, possibly on television*]. After that, the people will have to dig the ground and build the embankment. To get to Nat Ein Taung is very far, four days' walk. That is for a young man, and elderly like me will need more time. I heard that after finishing the [*Nat Ein Taung*] railway, they will start the pipeline. The ones who will build the pipeline are foreigners, because the Burmese can't do it themselves. The foreigners will tell them what to do and the Burmese will do the work. Last year [*November 1994-January 1995*] there were so many foreigners at "14-mile", one day's walk from Ye [*south of Ye, north of the pipeline route*]. They slept at the army camp. Whenever they went out for measuring or surveying, they were escorted by many soldiers from LIB 343, IB 62 and other battalions as well as soldiers from Tavoy. They were using something like a telescope and tapes to measure. Only they can use these — the Burmese can't do anything by themselves. They built a microwave tower, same as the one in Thanbyuzayat, nearby the small airstrip at "14-mile". They made a temporary one. I think they will build a very big one. Maybe it is a receiver to contact all over Burma. [*In this area, the surveying was most likely related to onshore exploration work, though the microwave tower could also be useful to the pipeline project.*]

Interview: 115-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Torture, Child, Slavery

Name : Maung Aung Htay
Age: 20

Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single, parents alive and have five brothers and sisters
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Pyu Pat, Paung Township. (between Martaban & Thaton), Mon State
 Interviewed: 4 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was working in Kyauk Ka Din village as a caretaker on a rubber and betelnut plantation. Then the headman collected workers and I was taken to work on the railway for the SLORC Army. The villagers from whole village, regardless of sex, had to go. As they collected all the adults, the children couldn't stay at home alone and they went along with their parents. It was five months ago [*in January*]. We had to walk two hours to the work-site, carrying our own rice and other belongings.

Each person had to dig the ground into holes 10 square feet by one foot deep, dig four and a half holes like that and carry the dirt. If my family had four people, we would have to do this work four times — two people would dig the ground and the other two would carry it up and pile it on the railway [*embankment*]. It took nearly one month. We got no food and no salary, and we had to bring our own tools. People who didn't want to do this work had to pay 300 Ks for each hole — 10 square feet by one foot deep. We worked eight hours a day. We got up early and started. At 10:00 a.m., we had a break until 2:00 p.m. Then we had to work again until sunset, about 6:00 p.m. They didn't allow us to leave until all the work was completed. Soldiers were guarding us during the work. There were so many workers and about 10 or 15 soldiers from LIB 403 guarding us. If a villager took a rest too long, they forced him to get back to work. I didn't see anyone being beaten, but people got sick. The soldiers didn't give any medicine. I saw some people seriously ill, but I didn't see anyone dying. They let those people go home, but they had to hire other people to come and replace them if their work wasn't finished. At night we slept in our own shelters. We had to build our own shelters at the work-site, or else sleep on the ground. The children stayed in the shelters while their parents were working. No one looked after them. The youngest worker was about 10 years old, and the eldest about 60. The place was near Yah Pu village. The area had already been cleared.

I was there about one month. After three or four months I was back in the village, they called me as a porter. LIB 409 ordered to send two or three porters from every village, and the headman ordered me. I had to go with the army to the nearby villages, carrying pots and other cooking equipment. I had to work the whole day. The duty was for one month, then other villagers came to replace us. We ate the same food as the soldiers, like rice, beans and fish-paste. If porters couldn't carry they were beaten up. I didn't see it in my column. But I saw it happening in other columns. Some elderly who couldn't carry their burdens were punched and kicked by the soldiers.

It was very painful. I saw one who couldn't walk because of the beating, and they abandoned him. Nobody took care of him. I didn't see whether he died. Some of those who couldn't carry anymore decided to run away. Those who were caught were beaten very severely. But most of them were never caught.

After one month as a porter I stayed only another one month in the village, and then they called me again for the second time to go for IB 104. The second time I was a porter for only two days, then I ran away. Three of us — another porter, this SLORC soldier here [*he arrived together with deserter Ko Ko Maung — see his testimony, 115.*] and I — ran away from the camp at about 10:00 p.m. We had planned for escape together. The soldiers chased us but they were not able to find us. Therefore, we escaped. The following morning, we reached a village and met Mon troops in a betelnut plantation. We explained our situation to them and they took us to their district office. We escaped on 6 May. Now I would like to stay here as a DPA soldier [*Democratic People's Army, a relatively small armed opposition group*]. I have never been a soldier before. I can't manage to live in Burma [*meaning 'down in Burma' as opposed to Mon territory*]. There are so many taxes, like porter fees and others.

Interview: 116-HRV: Livelihood, Torture, Child, Slavery, Execution

Name : Ko Ko Maung
 Age: 23
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married, no children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Hlegu Township, near Rangoon
 Interviewed: 4 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

[*Ko Ko Maung was the Burmese soldier who escaped with porter Maung Aung Htay. See interview 115.*]

I was in the army for four years. I was a private, and I got 700 Ks per month. I stopped studying when I was 8 or 10 years old, in 4th standard. When my mother died, I went to stay with my aunt in Rangoon. One of my cousins failed his examination, and my aunt scolded at him and beat him. He ran away from home. We all searched for him, and I found him at Mingaladon recruiting centre. I couldn't manage to bring him back home. So I decided to join him to stay together with him, and both of us joined the army. That was in December 1990. I joined, but I had to wait for one year before the training. I stayed at Mingaladon and worked for the army as a labourer in an army plantation. They were vegetable gardens for food for the army. Then I was in training for about six months at No. 4 Central Training

Centre in Weh Ga Li, near Thanbyuzayat. I learned how to use assault and small arms. After that I was posted to a unit, I had to learn about heavy weapons. There was nothing about how to treat civilians. During training we were beaten by the commanders, very often. They punched us and slapped us when we couldn't follow the lessons.

I was sent to IB 104 in Tavoy. I was there for one month and then they sent me on duty to Nat Ein Taung camp. We had to dig holes, build trenches, overhead bunkers and fences in the camp. We stayed at the camp and didn't go fighting. Only sometimes, we went patrolling outside the camp. Then I returned to my base [*in Tavoy*] and stayed there about six months. Then I was deployed with a mobile unit at Kawza village area to search for enemies and fight them. I have many experiences of fighting rebel troops. Sometimes we lost 30 or 40 soldiers, including some officers. I was wounded slightly once, in my leg. Sometimes we arrested villagers. When we arrested the suspects, we interrogated them and if it was evident that these villagers had contact with rebels, we killed them. If there was no evidence, we released them. The commander gave the orders. I was ordered to kill villagers twice. One was from Kawza village and another was a rebel whom was caught while living in a village. We never took the villagers' property, but sometimes we shot their chickens for our food. My unit was a mobile unit so we didn't deal too much with the villagers. Our officers ordered us to reach certain places by certain times. If the porters couldn't carry the ammunition, we wouldn't reach the place in time. So we beat the porters to go faster and to be able to get there on time. Sometimes we beat them, sometimes we didn't. I never beat porters. The officers didn't beat soldiers but they punished us. Soldiers who made mistakes had to carry seven or eight bricks in a backpack and run around for at least half an hour. Most of the soldiers were young. The youngest was 16, and the eldest was about 30.

I didn't like the behaviour of the army on the villagers. When elderly were treated badly, I felt like it was my father or my mother. What would they feel? If the soldiers treat people like that in other areas of Burma, maybe my relatives are suffering the same. Twice before I tried to escape from the army with a friend. The first plan was discovered by the officers. When the officer asked my friend, "Who will desert the army with you?", he said, "Nobody. I am alone." Because he shut his mouth, I was safe. This time I had decided to flee and I discussed it with two porters. When we had been on patrol, these two porters had been with me all the time. So I thought they might have the same idea as me. It was 16 [of May] and we were in Kyauk Ka Din village. I told them that I would join the Mon army and asked them, "Will you follow me?" They said, "Okay, we will follow you." Then during my sentry duty, we ran away from the camp.

My wife and I were staying at the family barracks in the camp. I left her at the camp. I think now she will be sent back to her parents' house, not too far away. That's usually what happens. Another time, Cpl Tin Myint Oo escaped from the camp with five of his soldiers. I was part of Column 2. My commander was Maj Aung Kyaw

Oo and the Battalion Commander was Lt-Col Zaw Win Myint. Now I would like to stay here and serve as a soldier with these troops [*Democratic People's Army*]. If I have a chance to fight the SLORC Army, I will be happy.

Interview: 117-HRV: Livelihood, Torture, Slavery, Execution, Refugees, Forced Labour, Women

Name : Nai Nee
 Age: 41
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with three children (age 7 to 19 years)
 Occupation: Day labourer
 Address : Kwan Dut village, Ye Township, Mon State
 Interviewed: 19 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

I arrived two weeks ago [*at the refugee camp*]. I couldn't stay in my village anymore. We were afraid. They take the men as porters. They take people for the railway. We can't work for ourselves, we have to work for the army all the time. Last year I had to go and work for the railway line three times, and once just before I came here. This year is much worse than last year. There are 60 houses in my village. One person from each house had to go. We had to dig a 50-feet-long hole. To measure the depth, the soldiers gave us a stick. This year, there is no chance to stop working. Last year, we worked for one month and we could stop for two weeks. This year over 10,000 people worked there. Every village had to go. The headman ordered me, and I started in March. He didn't say how long I'd have to work. Last year I worked three times, sometimes for two months, sometimes one month. This year I only worked for one month, then I fled to the border.

There were seven work-sites in the area. I worked at "7-mile". From my village [*north of Ye*] I had to walk four hours to the motorway, then I took a bus to Ye. Those who didn't have money couldn't afford the 45 Ks for the bus fare. They had to walk from my village to Ye — it takes 24 hours. We had to sleep one night in Ye. Then from Ye to the work-site, 24 hours walking again. There were 60 people from my village. We had to work there. We had to build our own shelters. We built a shelter for 10 people, very small and crowded, but we could sleep. There were no toilets, we had to go to the bushes. We drank water from a stream. We had to find our food ourselves. We didn't have a specific place to work — every day they told us where to work. We worked from 6:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., then lunch. Then from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. Then we had dinner and we slept. There were about 10,000 people in "7-mile" area. We had to bring food from our village. As there were many shops around the area, we could buy food there if we had money. If we had no

money, we couldn't buy anything. There was no clinic, no medicine. Somebody from Ka Law village came to sell medicine every morning and evening.

Q: Were you paid any salary?

A: Are you crazy? No money!

Q: SLORC says you can watch videos at night.

A: [Laugh] No, no — we were in the jungle there!

Q: SLORC says the villagers enjoy staying there and don't want to go home.

A: We were working hard on the railway to finish as soon as possible, so we could go home to do our own work. SLORC never gave us even one milk-tin of rice!

Our group stayed together in one area. Once a day the soldiers came to look around, but they didn't stay. Maybe they stayed hidden in the bushes, I didn't know. We dared not escape because the soldiers would inform our headman. If a person tried to escape and was arrested later by SLORC, he had to go as a porter for a long time and serve as a human shield for the troops. In March, I was beaten because I couldn't work. [*Soldiers caught him sleeping during the day when they came around.*] I was sick and wanted to go home. I didn't have any more food, but they didn't give me any and they accused me of pretending to be sick. They said, "Why are you sick now? You were not sick when you started to work here. You are pretending to be sick." They beat me. They punched me in the stomach so many times. "Why are you sleeping?" the soldiers said, and, "What kind of animal are you to think you can sleep like this?" [*a very rude expression in Burmese*] Pah...Pah...Pah... I couldn't count the punches. They punched me very hard, and they also kicked me but that was not as bad. One soldier beat me, then I went outside and other soldier beat me. After that, I couldn't carry any heavy load anymore. I had internal pain. When the work was finished, I went to get treated at the hospital. It still hurts.

I heard about one person from Thaung Prang village, who was beaten to death, and that SLORC soldiers from "9-mile" work-site raped a woman from Thaung Prang at night and then killed her. The soldiers always teased the women. Sometimes they touched them with their hands. The women dared not say anything. About half of the workers were women. We were all together, breaking rocks and carrying the dirt. It was the same work as last year. I was the only one from my family, because I didn't let my wife or my children work there. They sold vegetables in the village to live while I was gone. At the railway, I had no more food so I asked the leader if I could go back home to get some food. I went back, but my wife and children had already left to come here. So I followed them. In the village we also had to pay 50 Ks per month per family for porter fees. They also collected money for the railway to pay the technical supervisor. Both soldiers and villagers had to guard the railway. So we had to pay 300 Ks for that too, because those villagers are SLORC followers.

Interview: 118-HRV: Livelihood, Torture, Slavery, Execution, Forced Labour, Refugees, Detention, Child

Name : U Myint Gyi
Age: 56
Sex : Male
Ethnicity: Tavoyan
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with eight children (age 10 months to 27 years)
Occupation: Fisherman
Address : Kyauk Gone village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: 1 June 1995
Source: KHRG

I arrived here [*the refugee camp*] in the middle of April. We couldn't stay in our village anymore because we had to pay 250 Ks per week. So we hid in the jungle, and then I couldn't do my work. That's why I couldn't stay. If I worked all day I could only get food for one day, and I have a big family. I couldn't stay with them because I always had to run. I slept in the jungle for four months. If I have many normal problems, I will face them even if I have to die. But I couldn't pay and I couldn't run away from the soldiers, so I couldn't stay in my village. I brought my whole family with me. I've never been here before, I'd only heard about this place.

The soldiers don't care about the elderly or the young — if they see you they will arrest you and force you to be a porter. If you can pay 3,000 Ks, they will release you. But I couldn't pay, and I couldn't go as a porter. Whenever they arrested an elderly man, they held him and demanded the villagers sending five young men for five days before the elderly was released. But after five days, they still didn't release him. I've been a porter five times: two times last year and two weeks for each time and three times just before coming here, in February, March, and April. The last time was from Natkyizin to Yah Pu, Kyauk Ka Din and Alah Sakan, over the hills. The other times were to Kyauk Ka Yan and Mine Yan and back. The battalions that come to my village are LIBs 410, 404 and 408. But I was a porter for IBs 104 and , and then LIB 409. We got a milk-tin of rice and beans twice a day. When we reached the camp, sometimes we got better food, like bits of coconut in our beans. It was not enough. If we had money we could buy more food. We slept in a monastery compound. The soldiers guarded us, and if we needed to go to the toilet we had to ask their permission.

I had to carry two soldiers' bags, about five viss [*8 kg*] each, but I don't know what was inside. The others had heavier loads. Those who couldn't climb were severely kicked and beaten. The porters who carried ammunition got tired quickly. They were often kicked and beaten, and the soldiers scolded at them badly. Some fell down and pretended they couldn't get up again. Some fell down the slope on purpose so they could try to escape. But some were beaten with sticks and kicked with boots

to death, and they also hit them with rifle butts and rifle barrels. There was an elderly Mon man who was about 60 years old. He was on his back, and they poked him in the belly with rifle barrels and hit his back with rifle butts. Also, the porters who got sick had to die. If they couldn't go or couldn't move, the soldiers pushed them down the mountainside. If there was a ditch, they pushed them into it. Sometimes they threw them into the bushes. If somebody found them later, maybe they'd have a chance to live. We passed someone moaning in the bushes, and the soldiers never paid any attention or even looked. So the porters' saying is, "If you can't walk, you die. You walk, you will live." Some of the porters were teenagers - 16 or 17 or 18 years old. Some were in their 60s. There were about 100 soldiers and 80 porters or so, from different villages. I didn't try to escape because I was afraid. They usually shot at the ones who tried to escape. I only went back home when they released me.

There are 150 houses in my village, mostly Mon with some Tavoyans and Burmese. Many people came here already, and a few are still arriving. I heard from the newcomers that now the people in our village are not being allowed to grow paddy, instead the soldiers are forcing them to build a road from Pyu Gyi to Kyauk Gone. The road is half finished. Our village is far from the railway, but last year I had to work there for 15 days near Natkyizin, digging and carrying the ground. Compared to being a porter, I want to refuse both kinds of labour, but being a porter is harder. At the railway we stopped working at 5:00 p.m., but as a porter I got no rest. They didn't call again for railway labour this year. They stopped the work, and now the railway route is damaged. We heard that they will call us for the pipeline project too, but they have not done it yet. Maybe they stopped that project already. Before leaving my village I heard they were working on it, both porters and villagers, and that there are soldiers there. But I didn't see, because there is a river between my village and that place.

Now things in my village are getting worse. It started getting worse about two years ago. The villagers are forced to work but they don't receive even five pyas [0.05 kyat]. We heard that foreigners give money, but SLORC gives no money to the villagers. This government is like a giant beast that tortures human beings. I came to stay here, so I will stay here. Here, there are also many problems [*with the Thai authorities*], but I think we will have to stay at least five years. If the situation doesn't get better in my village, maybe 10 years.

Interview: 119-HRV: Livelihood, Torture, Forced Labour, Refugees

Name : Nai Maung Hla
 Age: 28
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist

Family: Married with three children (age 1 to 8 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Aru Taung village, Ye Township, Mon State
 Interviewed: 19 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

I got here [*the refugee camp*] two weeks ago, because we couldn't bear oppression from SLORC any more. I had to go work on the railway twice: in January and February. Before they took people from other villages, but now they have started to take people in our village. It is our turn now. They also asked 100 Ks per month per family -- 50 Ks per month as porter fees and 50 Ks for the railway. They said the money was to hire people to guard the railway. They also ordered the villagers to go and guard the railway, but I didn't have to go for that. I had to dig the ground and build an embankment which was over 16 ft long and 9 ft wide. I wasn't beaten, but if people couldn't do the work for them then they were beaten. The railway is nine miles from our village. By the railway, the SLORC troops will be able to move more easily in the area. They will build camps and make more problems for the ethnic people, so it is not good for the villagers. I heard that they will build a fence along the entire way from our village to Taung Moon. Maybe they will relocate our village to another place. I don't think we will be able to travel peacefully. So many of them will come there soon.

This year it is the same as last year. But we are worried more than last year, because it is almost rainy season so we are worried about our paddy fields [*i.e. that if they are called for labour they won't be able to plant a crop*]. I have a farm where I grow durian, jackfruit and pineapple. But now I have come here with my family and I feel better here. It took us about three days. We couldn't carry anything with us. Many people have already left our village. Some are here, and some more are planning to come here. There are 450 households in my village. I've met about 10 of them here so far.

Interview: 120-HRV: Livelihood, Torture, Judicial, Child, Forced Labour, Women, Refugees

Name : Maung Aung Shwe
 Age: 26
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single
 Address : Rangoon
 Interviewed: 7 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

[Escaped convict Maung Aung Shwe arrived in a Mon camp in February 1995 after escaping forced labour on the Ye-Tavoy railway.]

I am from a big family of eight brothers and sisters. I am in the middle. All are single. I was a 10th standard student. We went to Myitkyina [*Kachin State*] and Hpakant to look for jade. We went happily and legally. One day, we were drinking and eating at a small shop. A policeman came and demanded money from my brother, but my brother said, "I don't want to deal with the police. Don't ask for money. Go away." A quarrel broke out between my brother and the policeman. The policeman started swinging a stool. I was hit on my head, and I stabbed the policeman's belly with a fork. I went back to my house. Then I went to the hospital and got seven stitches on my head. My brother stayed with the policeman, took care of him and took him to the hospital. I went into hiding in Mandalay. After 26 days, the policeman died. I returned home in Rangoon to see my mother. I arrived home at 1:00 p.m. I sent someone to buy a packet of cigarettes while my mother slept and I waited upstairs. Then 12 policeman in civilian clothes came in, went upstairs, broke the door of my room and arrested me. I was amazed at how they caught me. My mother didn't even notice them coming in.

They took me to the police station, beat me and asked me many questions. My whole body was painful, especially my stomach. I could neither lie down nor sleep well because of the pain. It was difficult to urinate for about 12 days. They made me "ride the motorcycle" [*a standard SLORC torture — the victim is forced to squat on the floor for extended periods, pretend he is riding a motorcycle and make motorcycle noises, while the officer gives commands like "Turn left! Stop!" The victim has to make honking noises when his ear is pulled. Meanwhile, he is constantly being beaten with clubs*]. They blindfolded me and beat me. They made me stand on needles. The police beat me continuously for 12 days. They ordered me to give them the murder weapon, but I couldn't give them the fork. They asked questions about the fork. I was detained for one month in a special room, then I was brought back to cell at police station for 14 days. Then they sent me to court. I explained the truth about what had happened. The only problem was that I couldn't show them the fork. The judge said I was trying to hide the evidence. I was sentenced under Section 201, and also for causing death. That was in March 1993. They sent me to Insein jail. I was there for one year and three months. In jail we had to work. If you bribed them, they allowed you not to work for a few days. Some paid 900 Ks to get 14 days rest. Some gave 1,500 Ks for several months at a time. Those who couldn't pay were called in the morning and assigned duties like cleaning the compound, cleaning the toilets, working in the kitchen, etc. The food was not good but it was enough. Everyday, we got yellow-bean soup in the morning and vegetable soup in the evening. But no soup taste good as they were lack of seasoning. Pork or fish was seen once a week.

I was in a huge room separate from the main building. About 120 prisoners stayed there, sometimes fewer, but normally at least 90. When there were 120, we only got

a very small space to sleep. My family came once a week. They gave money to the prison officers and sent food. I could speak to them, but there were guards around. We weren't allowed to write letters but I did it secretly. I paid money to borrow books. If prisoners fought each other, the guards put them in the dark room, the hot room or a room filled with water. I found some prisoners stabbed with a sharpened iron bar. I didn't know how that quarrel started. Iron bars were easy to get in the jail. I also heard that some prisoners killed themselves.

The youngest prisoner was 12 years old. The eldest was about 80. There were many old prisoners. Usually, murder was sentenced to five years. Premeditated murder and rape could be 15 to 20 years. An accident causing death is at least one or two years. A torturer could get three or four years, and a car accident one or two years.

After 15 months they took me to Hlegu Township, on the Rangoon-Mandalay highway project. We dug and carried the ground. We were tied with chains. We were chained day and night. At forced labour places, rapists were chained for one year while convicts for murder, robbery and burglary cases were chained for six months. Villagers were also working on the road. But prisoners were separate from the villagers. Not only the prison authorities but also the soldiers and police guarded us. There were Lon Htein [*riot police*] from Pegu, and soldiers from LIB 217, under the command of LID 11. They watched us from behind. We were always working. Prisoners who worked slowly or got tired quickly were beaten and kicked. It was hard work to carry stones or dirt up the bank. Once there was a dispute and the guard hit me twice with a stick, on the shoulders and the back. If a prisoner couldn't pay them, they beat him too much. Therefore, I gave them 2,500 Ks. If prisoners fought each other they were beaten severely, and sometimes even put in a cell or put in stocks in a building of the camp. Some had to stay in the stocks for 15 days, or a maximum of one month. The prisoners slept in a barracks that was built for us before we arrived. There were about 250 prisoners in one barrack. From Insein jail, there were 250 of us on the highway. There were 200 more prisoners working on the nearby farms. We had half a day's rest in the morning on every Sunday and I had to work on the vegetable farm. I was there in 1994. I didn't remember exactly which month.

I was there for two months and then transferred to the prisoner camp at Thaton. We had to crush stones in a quarry, at Yin Nyein in Thaton Township. In front of our camp was a plain with many huge stones laying on the ground. We worked in chains. The prison authorities administered the camp. They had rifles. There were only prisoners working there. Some died because of explosions, and rocks hit them. Some died of disease because they couldn't get to the hospital in time. During the time I was there, about 17 or 18 prisoners died, mostly on the way to the hospital. We had a "medic". He was chosen from among the prisoners. If a prisoner could give money to the medic, he could rest. According to the rules the authorities should pay the prisoners 10 Ks per month, but they never do. They just gave the prisoners some cheroots and MSG [*for cooking*]. I worked there for six months [*from the rest of his*

testimony, it appears that it was actually only three months]. Then I was sent to another place with some other prisoners.

I was sent to Ko-Mine [*"9-mile", on the Ye-Tavoy railway*] camp. I was there for more than four months. I was promoted to a Guard. My duty was to make sure that no prisoners escaped. I also had to dig and level the ground, and cut into the hillside. Sometimes we had to clear the ground for the railway and sometimes we had to clear it to make space for more prisoners to stay. We started at 6:00 a.m. We had a lunch break between noon and 1:00 p.m., and we finished at 5:00 p.m. I was still in chains for one month, then they untied me. [*His six months in chains for forced labour were up — convicts of murder cases are chained at forced labour camp for six months, as he said above.*] Until your time is due, they never take off the chains. In some cases, although a prisoner's time to be shackled with chains is over, the authorities don't take off the chains until they receive the order from higher authorities. The work at the railway was a bit harder than at the other places. We were surrounded by three lines of guards. There was a line of barbed wire, then sharpened bamboo stakes and traps. Behind those, the police and then the soldiers were guarding,. The prison authorities usually stayed in their barracks outside the fences. They arrested people and demanded money, and then with that money they hired women. The soldiers were from LIB 343. At the other side of Ko-Mine bridge, there were troops from LIB 406.

There were 350 prisoners in the camp from many jails: Sittwe [*Arakan State*], Mandalay, Myaungmya [*Irrawaddy Delta*], Bassein [*Irrawaddy Delta*], Moulmein, etc. There were three prisoners' barracks for 350 prisoners. The latrines were just inside the fences, out the back door of the barracks. At night there were sentries near the toilets — we had to announce ourselves with our prisoner number, name and what we wanted to do. Twice a day we got rice, less than one milk-tin full [*very little*], and banana stem and salt in water which was not boiled, just hot. There was no clinic in the camp, only in the village [*9-Mile village, nearby*]. We had to wear white shirts and white longyis [*prison uniform, of very coarse material*].

There were villagers there too, doing the same work as us: digging and clearing. Our work was harder, but theirs was also hard and they had to bring their own food as well. They also were guarded. Some of the girls aged 12 or 13 or 16 or 18 were raped. The officer who raped them was [Capt] Nyi Nyi from LIB 343. The girls were from Han Gan, Thaug Byin, and villages just south of Ye. I heard about some of these cases, and some I saw. He called the girls while they were working along the railway in the daytime. When I was going to the toilets, I saw one. She didn't shout because they had guns. They threatened her. They released her after they raped.

I saw people who were beaten. Me, I was beaten on my head for fighting. Most of the guards were drunk, so they beat and kicked us all over. Sometimes they forced us to lie down and beat and kicked us from above. Sometimes they jumped up and

down on us. After being beaten, we went to the clinic in the nearby village to get medicine when the working period was over. Then the following day when they counted the prisoners, we could ask for lighter work if we were injured. I couldn't work after that. They allowed me to work slowly, but not too slowly. If I was too slow they would beat me, so I kept working. It was quite difficult to move after the beating, especially in my waist. Some were beaten badly and died later. They couldn't be cured. I knew three of them. Four died of beatings altogether. The day I left, one died of cholera. He was sent to the clinic but his body already smelled bad, so they put him in a car to sent to the hospital. But when it started moving, he died. Win Naing from Myaungmya died of starvation. He was 22 or 23. He died on the way to the clinic after being beaten badly. Kyaw Kyaw died of disease. He was 19. Also, Zaw Oo. In the past he was a Corporal in the army. He tried to escape and the soldiers shot him. He was around 20 years old. [*He was in jail for attempted desertion.*] Another one tried to escape and the soldiers shot him too, but I didn't remember his name. He was from Bassein and drugs addict. His sentence was five years.

My family came to visit me twice at the railway construction site. They could give money for me, but they had spent a lot on me already. My father is a mechanic for the Railway Corporation and my mother makes food and sells it. Of eight brothers and sisters, only two are working.

I escaped from Ko-Mine camp in February [1995]. I heard that some people in the villages would help people on the way. I was helped by a policeman. That day I didn't go to work. I pretended to be sick, and asked permission for absence. That day there were only two policemen near our barracks, and both of them were my friends. One of them left for the hospital to send a sick prisoner. But the sick man died on the way. So another policeman was left alone. We made a trick, and told him, "The Intelligence Officer wants to see you". He left, and we took our chance. We crossed the fences. We went over the barbed wire, then we cut the woven bamboo fence with a knife. Then we crawled through the fence. We hurt ourselves doing that. We went to an area and, then we crossed the mountains. Now I want to go to Bangkok and I want to contact my parents. My parents don't know I've escaped. I am very afraid to go back to Burma.

Interview: 121-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Slavery, Displacement

Name :	Ko Hla Myint
Age:	30
Sex :	Male
Ethnicity:	Burman
Religion:	Buddhist
Occupation:	Farmer
Address :	Kanbauk village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division

Interviewed: 11 May 1995

Source: KHRG

Q: How did they find labourers for the gas pipeline project?

A: They have application forms. We had to buy them for 15 Ks from the village head. We tried, but we were not accepted. They brought their labourers from Rangoon and other places, about 1,200 or 1,300 or more. About 500 villagers wanted jobs, but only about 100 were accepted. It was by decision of the authorities, I think. Only a few were accepted. Anyone who failed the medical check-up was refused a job. I don't know how much the people paid to pass the medical check-up. They were only the ones who were close to the authorities. Ordinary villagers were refused. We were not happy. We had no work except forced portering and forced labour [*for SLORC troops*]. Most of their workers were brought from Rangoon.

Q: What did the paid labourers do?

A: They built houses and some buildings along the Onpinkwin road. There are about 30 buildings at their camp, between Onpinkwin and Kanbauk. Foreigners live there, and also labourers from Rangoon. They repaired the road, some worked for the surveying and some cutting the trees [*clearing the way for survey work*]. There were forced porters too. The forced porters cut down the trees, then the paid labourers cleared them away. The paid labourers get 200 Ks for one day, but the porters get nothing. The route has been cleared from Kyauk Sa Ywe to Thon Taung Gwin.

Q: What about the road?

A: They repaired the road from Kaleinaung to Kanbauk [*Kaleinaung is east of Kanbauk, near the junction with the main north-south road*]. About half of it has now been tarred. Some farmers lost their land. Now they are planning to build a new army camp at the entrance to our village, and many more farmers will lose their land. [*The battalion is for pipeline security, and no land compensation is ever paid.*] They have not built it yet, it is just their plan. I've already had to work one, two, three, four months for the soldiers without getting any money [*at army camps and as a porter*], and I have no time to work for myself. I heard if the gas pipeline comes, our situation will improve. But actually, we only have to work for them [*soldiers*] more without getting any pay. We have to take our own food and build their barracks, bunkers and so on. Before, we had to give them about 100 Ks per month as porter fees [*extortion fees paid to avoid even more forced labour*]. Every family. But now, it is 400 Ks. They said if I could not pay the money, they would take me as a porter for the whole month. If we don't pay the money, they will take action.

Q: TOTAL Co. said they will have health programmes — have you seen any result of this?

- A: No. I think there are no changes. No programmes. There was a building the council started building under the Ma Sa La [*Burma Socialist Programme Party, Ne Win's pre-1988 dictatorship*], but it was never completed. Now SLORC has forced the villagers to give money and labour to finish it. Then they said it will become a village clinic. As there is no medicine nor doctors, no patients go there. That is why we chose to leave our village.

Interview: 122-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Displacement

Name : Daw Than
 Age: 38
 Sex : Female
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with four children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Kanbauk village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: May 1995
 Source: KHRG

- Q: Why did you leave your village?
 A: I was working for the Mines Department. My salary was 650 Ks per month. But I had to pay porter fees, and "gas pipeline fees". It cost me about 1,200 Ks per month, sometimes 1,400 Ks. Then if the villagers would be summoned to contribute labour for the railway, I had to pay 400 Ks more. But for now, it was mainly fees for the gas pipeline and to avoid portering. Once I quarrelled with the authorities. I said I could not give the money, and they replied that if I could not give the money then I have to go and work as a porter. It got too difficult to stay there. All the prices and fees are so high. So I resigned from the Mines Department, and then I came directly to the border.

For the pipeline, now they are clearing the ground and surveying. The buildings where the foreigners are staying, about one and a half miles from Kanbauk, are nearly finished. Three girls are cooking for them. They also brought in three or four pickup trucks.

Interview: 123-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Slavery, Displacement, Refugees

Name : Kyaw Win
 Age: 28
 Sex : Male

Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with three children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Kanbauk village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 11 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

Q: When did you leave Kanbauk?

A: On 8 May 1995.

Q: How much did you have to pay to village LORC for porter fees?

A: Every month 150 Ks per family. For each turn, 10 porters are demanded. Anyone who fails to go has to pay 4,000 Ks fine for a replacement. We also have to pay 60 Ks for Ya Wa Ta [*Village Law & Order Restoration Council — local SLORC administration*] development fund and 30 Ks for USDA each month. [*USDA is the "Union Solidarity Development Association", created in 1994 by SLORC in an attempt to artificially create a mass support organisation for itself.*]

Q: What about the procedure to apply for pipeline jobs?

A: Our village was limited to 200 applications. Most of the employees are from Rangoon. Only those who are close to the officials are accepted, only close hands and money-givers. Those with no money are not considered at all. The application forms were sold for 20 Ks each by Ya Wa Ta [Village LORC] officials. We had to give our applications to TOTAL head office. Each applicant had to pay 1,000 Ks to get a good result on the medical check-up. When they first arrived, the company promised to give us priority. We are really disappointed. They only think about giving priority to those from Rangoon. There are about 1,000 workers from Rangoon and 200 from Kanbauk. TOTAL pays them 200 Ks per day.

Q: What kind of work is being done?

A: Building construction, around Onpinkwin and Ka Daik villages. Some are doing survey work, some building roads and some repairing buildings. The road construction is from Kaleinaung to Kanbauk. Farmlands are being damaged, but what is worse is that a new army base is to be built. We hear that it will be at the entrance to our village, at Baw Di Gone [quarter]. If it is sited there, then most of the orchards and fields will surely be destroyed.

Q: Do the villagers have to do forced labour to build the camp?

A: No, not yet, but they will have to for sure. The base is just being planned right now.

Q: Who is doing the [pipeline-related] work?

- A: Mostly 200 workers who were selected by TOTAL, and many [forced] porters too. The porters are from the outskirts of the village. Some are rounded up by the army, and some are on rotating porter duty. The porters are mostly ordered to do clearing work which is harder than survey work. Many porters have fled, that is how we know. Except for the officially hired workers, no workers are paid. That is what the fleeing porters told us.
- Q: How do you feel?
- A: We have had to pay many kinds of fees to Ya Wa Ta since 1988. The porter fees have increased annually. When TOTAL first arrived the fee was 400 Ks, but now it is up to 500 Ks [*per family per month*]. We were promised work to make us prosperous but now we feel cheated. Besides destroying our gardens, SLORC soldiers help themselves freely to our fruit so we face many hardships. That is why we have come here to the refugee camp.

Interview: 124-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Displacement

Name : Ma Nyi Nyi
 Age: 30
 Sex : Female
 Address : Kanbauk village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: May 1995
 Source: KHRG

I am from Kanbauk. A lot of villagers from Kanbauk and other villages around there are working on the gas pipeline, about half of them along the Onpinkwin—Kanbauk road, and some at their base. Now they are paying money. Adults get 125 Ks per day. They are paid every five days. [*They are supposed to get 200 Ks per day. Either she has heard wrong or SLORC is taking part of their pay.*] I depend on my husband's salary. He gets 1,000 Ks per month working for the Mines Department. It is not enough to survive [*because of SLORC fees*], so we left.

There are about five or six foreigners at the pipeline base. It is difficult to describe them, because we only saw them in their cars. The soldiers were always with them. We heard they were French.

Now there are a lot of forced labourers working at Heinze Bok Island. Some villagers from Kanbauk went there, and they haven't come back. I don't know what they're doing there.

Interview: 125-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Slavery, Displacement, Refugees

Name : U Sein Myint
 Age: 65
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with six children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Kaung Hmu village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 10 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

Q: When did you leave your village?

A: On 7 May 1995.

Q: Why?

A: We could no longer pay the porter fees or contribute all the labour ordered by Ya Wa Ta authorities. I don't mean railway labour. Our village is one of the seven small villages that make up Hpaungdaw main village [*on the coast*]. We were ordered to go to work on construction of military camps on Heinze Bok Island. [*These are apparently being built to secure shipping of pipeline supplies or a possible offshore pipeline-related facility.*] Every month 30 people from our village had to go for seven days. We were not paid, we even had to take our own food for those seven days. Anyone not going for his turn had to pay 3,000 Ks. There are about 250 houses in Kaung Hmu village.

Q: Were there porter fees?

A: Yes, every family had to pay 200 Ks per month for porter fees. They also collected five people as porters every week. Anyone who didn't go was fined 4,000 Ks by Ya Wa Ta. Ya Wa Ta also collected 200 Ks for something they called the "miscellaneous fund", to be paid every month without fail.

Q: Will the gas pipeline pass through your village?

A: Yes. We have only seen the survey work up to now. Some people from Kaung Hmu applied for the work but did not get the job. We heard that the jobs went to some people from Hpaungdaw.

Q: Do you think the village will benefit from the pipeline?

A: We see no prosperity yet. Instead we have to face additional burdens. Now with the increased number of soldiers in the area we are ordered to be on "stand-by duty" [*lists of names must be submitted to the army camp, and these people must be available at a moment's notice for any forced labour*]

or errand required by the soldiers]. We also have to pay 50 Ks per month for the “stand-by” fund. So now we have to face both Ya Wa Ta and the SLORC soldiers at the same time. Because of all these situations, we had to flee to the border. We cannot live in peace in our place and we cannot afford to keep paying all the various fees and funds.

Interview: 126-HRV: Livelihood, Refugees

Name : Nai Chit Nyunt
 Age: 64
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Christian
 Address : Near Kanbauk, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 4 June 1995
 Source: KHRG

[Nai Chit Nyunt left his village and became a refugee in Thailand in late May 1995.]

I saw the natural gas companies near Kanbauk. They were guarded by SLORC soldiers for security. People told me it is TOTAL company. I did not work in their camp, I just sent the people from our village to work there. The headman asked me to guide them there. There were 15 people from my village. They got 200 Ks a day to conduct survey. They cut down trees and cleared the area for the survey team.

I went inside the [TOTAL] camp. The camp has wire all around and there are about 200 soldiers for security. There are 50 more soldiers out the back, but no soldiers inside the camp. They also have helicopters from Myanmar Airways landing beside the camp, and they have put many security troops near the landing pad for helicopters. At the entrance there is a checkpoint. They asked me where I came from. I told them I was coming to bring workers, and they let me through the gates. I went inside to meet U Aung Than and I left all the workers with him. Then I went back. I saw some foreigners there. I was there in the first week of March.

Interview: 127-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Slavery, Torture, Refugees, Execution

Name : Aung Mya
 Age: 23
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single

Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Ka M'laing village, Thayetchaung Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 11 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

[Taken as a porter in SLORC's offensive to secure the eastern portion of the pipeline route near Nat Ein Taung at the Thai border — this offensive began at the beginning of 1995 and has continued ever since. TOTAL representatives confirmed that they knew of it in discussions held in early March.]

I had to go as a porter in February. The SLORC village chairman collected 500 Ks from each house in our village. We didn't know the reason he collected the money, we just had to go and pay it. As I couldn't afford to pay 500 Ks to the village chief, I was sent to Thayetchaung village to be transferred to LIB 405 headquarters. All the porters were kept together there in the Thayetchaung village stadium. The soldiers guarded us and didn't allow us to go outside. Then, about 200 of us were sent to LIB 410 headquarters near Zin Ba village *[on the pipeline route]*. Then we had to carry rice and other things for LIBs 405 and 410 to Nat Ein Taung. Each porter had to carry 30 viss *[48 kg]*. I had to carry rice, about three big tin-fulls. Some porters got sick or fell down. The soldiers beat us. Some porters died while I was a porter. I knew one of them from my village of Ka M'Laing. His name was Ko Thein Myint, age 30 years, son of U Han Kyi. His wife is Ma Than Kyi who is now left with four children. Ko Thein Myint's health was not very good right from the start. He was sick all the way along while we were porters. Two days after we left Zin Ba, Ko Thein Myint fell down with his load, three big tins of rice, about 30 viss *[48 kg]*. He fell to the ground and he couldn't stand up anymore. The soldiers didn't help him. They said, "This guy is pretending he is ill", and they hit Ko Thein Myint with the rifle butts. Ko Thein Myint couldn't speak more than one word, and he died on the spot where he fell. I just heard him say, "Please, I'm going to die".

The SLORC soldiers from LIB 405 ordered us to carry Ko Thein Myint's body to the side of the path and to cover with branches. We did as the soldiers ordered us, and we left Ko Thein Myint's body there. There were other porters who also killed like that — one from *[Kywe]* Min Gone village in Thayetchaung Township, and another from Kyauk Ka Moat village in Thayetchaung Township. They died the same way as Ko Thein Myint. I didn't know their names because they were not from my village. Each of them was carrying one sack *[50 kg]* of rice like the rest of us. The SLORC soldiers ordered us to do the same thing to their remaining bodies as we did to Ko Thein Myint's body.

I was a porter for 15 days. We were not paid — we even had to take along our own money from home to buy food on the way. There was no compensation for the dead. For Ko Thein Myint, the SLORC village chief collected money — about 3,000 Ks — from the villagers in our village and gave it to Ko Thein Myint's wife. When I got back, I was ordered by the SLORC village chief to be a "volunteer" worker for

a short time. I had to go to Maung Mei Shaung village in Tavoy Township and work for the construction of the railroad. I was there for 15 days. I had to take my own money for food, and even for my bus fare. I didn't receive any money at all from them. I saw prisoners with chains on their feet working at Za Har village [*a convict railway labour camp near Tavoy*].

I came to the border because I was unhappy with living in my village to be a porter and to pay porter fees all the time. As for SLORC, we have to pay them and work for them all the time. We dare not speak our minds because we are always afraid of being taken action. So I was fed up with living under the SLORC regime and I fled to the border to start a new life.

Interview: 128-HRV: Livelihood, Slavery, Torture, Refugees

[Another porter who was taken more recently added the following:]

Source: KHRG

I had to go as a porter to Kyauk Ein and Daw Eit. There were about 80 porters. We were with IB 25. We had to carry beans, ammunition, but mostly rice. I had to carry about three big tins of rice [48 kg.]. We got very tired, but if we were slow the soldiers beat us. We didn't get enough food. We bought rice from the soldiers. The soldiers cooked themselves, then they sold at extra rice to us at the rate of 20 Ks per plate. About five or six porters got sick, but they got no treatment.

Interview: 129-HRV: Livelihood, Slavery, Torture, Judiciary

Name : Ko Maung Gyi
 Age: 30
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with two children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Kyauk Taung village, Tavoy Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 11 May 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was ordered to be a porter. I refused to go, and there was a scuffle. Then they handcuffed me and took me to the police station. The policemen at the station beat me. Then they sent me to the Tavoy jail by car. I was sentenced to one month in jail. They never took me to court. I didn't know under which Section I was sentenced to.

Before that I always had to be a porter twice a month, and if I couldn't go I had to

give them 1,500 Ks. After I was released, I had to work as a porter again. Our village was divided into four groups and they always took one from each group. It was arranged by Ya Wa Ta [Village LORC] members.

Interview: 130-HRV: Livelihood, Slavery, Forced Labour, Displacement

Name : Pu Hla Shwe
 Age: 64
 Sex : Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Family: Married
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address : Pyun Sah Le village
 Interviewed: May 1995
 Source: KHRG

I came here because Burmese soldiers forced us to move. They forced our village to move to Na Bu, last year in March. I refused to move. I have paddy fields and farms. In our village the soldiers also collected porters and forced labourers for the railway. I ran, so they never made me a porter. They said they were moving our village because the Karen soldiers came there sometimes and they didn't want that. Na Bu is a Tavoyan village. When they ordered us to move, I didn't want to think about how I felt. I left and I have been here for four or five months.

Interview: 131-HRV: Livelihood, Slavery, Forced Labour

[Ma Nyunt, female, age unknown, a widow from Kanbauk area:]

Source: KHRG

There are 70 houses in my village. We have to pay forced labour fees once a month or every two months. Also porter fees. Each family has to pay 1,500 Ks, and then the following month another 1,500 Ks [*note: compared to villages in other areas this is an exorbitant amount, most likely resulting from the heavy concentration of troops present to protect the pipeline*]. There are two groups for labour — they take one group for forced labour at work-sites [*like army camps, roads etc.*], and another group as porters. Widows like me and handicapped people belong to the forced labour group for work-sites. As for the porters, they are changed monthly. They also take other porters — lately they've come three times and taken people for 10 days each time. [*The monthly porters have to stay with the soldiers all times and rotate every month, but when the soldiers need extra people they just come and take them*].

Interview: 132-HRV: Livelihood*[Ko Win Tint, male, aged 32, from Kanbawk:]*

Source: KHRG

Q: What do you know about the gas pipeline project?

A: Last month [*April*] they were setting up some buildings outside of Kanbawk, about two miles from Kanbawk [*the main TOTAL camp on the road to Onpinkwin*]. The helicopter was crossing overhead every day, sometimes about 10 times a day. It was carrying something. [*Other witnesses report a box slung underneath, possibly for aerial survey.*]

Q: What about the paid workers?

A: They were repairing the road from Hpaungdaw. They used to carry logs along that road, so it was damaged and needed repair. They were also clearing the ground, but I don't know the details. They started last month. The paid workers get blue uniforms and yellow helmets — all the same, officers and labourers.

Interview: 133-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Refugees*[Daw Myint, female, age 65-70, from Kanbawk area:]*

Source: KHRG

Q: How old is your son?

A: My son is 30. He had to go as a porter once a month. It was his turn, so he had to go.

Q: How much is the price of rice now?

A: One pyi [*about 2.5 kg*] costs 45 or 50 Ks. One viss of cooking oil is now 200 Ks. Everything is up. It's very difficult to stay anymore.

Q: You are quite old, so you have seen other governments in Burma. Which has been the worst?

A: Oh, dear. Now we have moved from our village and are staying here. Previous governments were also bad, but at least we could stay in our village. Now they are the worst.

Interview: 134-HRV: Detention, Livelihood, Forced Labour, Slavery*[The following interview was made with a 56-year-old man from Myaungmya Town in Irrawaddy Delta. He left the Delta in June 1995. The Irrawaddy Delta is populated by a few million people, 50% of them are Karen and 50% are Burmans. In recent*

decades it has been sealed off from the outside world more than almost any other area of Burma, and the Tatmadaw (Burma Army) has been able to get away with any form of repression it likes. In 1991, KNU managed to send some soldiers and weapons into the Delta in an effort to restart the resistance movement there which had been quiet for decades, but the troops were exposed. In events which became known as the Bogale Crisis, Tatmadaw launched a huge offensive into the area to wipe out the small number of KNLA forces and all seeds of civilian resistance. Villages were burned, helicopter gunships strafed villages and schools, and thousands of Karen community leaders, pastors and schoolteachers were arrested, sentenced en masse and imprisoned. Tatmadaw began a brutal campaign of repression, killings and disappearances against Karen in the area, which still remains almost completely unknown to the outside world. As a result, SLORC now feels confident enough of its control in the area that it has recently opened up some parts of it for tourism.]

Source: KHRG

In Myaungmya, people are not still being arrested. Some NLD elected MPs were detained for about two days and then released. That was three years ago. Now I think they're not attending the National Convention [*SLORC's meetings to draft a constitution*]. They are U Bo Pyu [*son of a journalist and government minister who was assassinated together with Aung San*] and U Aung Kyin. In the 1991 Bogale Crisis, many were arrested. I knew some of them from Myaungmya and Bassein districts. They were sentenced to one or two years imprisonment. Two elderly men died soon after their release. One was Mahn Ba Nyein, 63 years old, and the other was Pa Nyar Say, about 70 years old. They were from Bassein. They were ex-Karen soldiers, but they had retired 30 years ago already.

Bogale is quite far from Myaungmya. I knew of one battle there [*in October 1991*] between IB 11 from Bassein and Karens. It was near Ohn Bin village, Bogale Township. The SLORC troops lost about 60 or more. Then the Karen soldiers managed to move to Ngaputaw Township. There were about 40 of them. All of them were new recruits except for one KNLA soldier. He got injured in his leg, so he stayed along the way while his soldiers moved on. He shot about 15 SLORC soldiers before they killed him. After that many villagers were arrested. But I didn't know exactly because it was quite far from us.

Since then our family has had to work as forced labour on road construction, such as the Labutta-Rangoon and Myaungmya-Rangoon roads, and the Bassein International Airport project. On the Labutta-Rangoon road, we had to work the whole dry season this year. We had to excavate the ground, cut iron rods, and carry sand, stones, and bags of cement. There was also some bridge construction in Myaungmya where some Chinese engineers were there. The authorities paid money for bridge construction work, like 50 or 100 Ks per day, but not for road construction. On most of the road construction work each person had to go for a 15 day shift for the year, because they summoned labourers from 26 townships [*all of Irrawaddy Division*],

so there were a lot of people. The Myaungmya-Rangoon and Labutta-Rangoon road projects started three years ago. Neither road is paved.

In 1991 and 1992 we had to work on Bassein International Airport. There were more than 10,000 people who came from 26 townships. My sons had to go for eight or ten days. They had to raise and level the ground about 18 ft high over a very wide area. [*Making runways for jumbo jets; other witnesses have described thousands of people stamping down dirt with their bare feet to make these runways.*] The authorities arranged transportation [*to the work-site*] by issuing orders to all boat owners. The boat owners and the people received nothing. There was a medical team at the workplace, but it was insufficient for the whole gathering. Some people died because of snakebites. This work finished in 1992. [*The airport, however, is still not complete, and there has been more forced labour on it since then.*]

Every Saturday, each family from Myaungmya must send one person for cleaning the roads and the compounds of school and hospital. All this work is under the control of local Law and Order Restoration Council. Soldiers are not involved — they are at the work-sites away from towns.

About three or four years ago, people refused to join the army. But now, I think some people want to be soldiers because it is the only chance to survive. It is very difficult to live as a normal civilian. We are always afraid of the army. One pyi [*about 2.5 kg*] of rice cost 50 to 60 Ks. Civilians had to give about 5 kg of meat to the army every time they killed their own cows or pigs. The soldiers also forced us to rebuild their barracks, to make fences and to stand as sentries for the security of their battalion compound. Last year, soldiers from IB 93 in Myaungmya demanded to a powered schooner from Thein Lar village in Myaungmya Township. So the villagers collected money and then gave the schooner to the soldiers. But when the soldiers left, they just went and sold the schooner and took all the money instead of returning to the village. In Myaungmya Town, we didn't have to go as porters for the soldiers. But in remote villages, people had to give porter fees to the army or go as porters. Our family had to pay 80 Ks each month as "sentry fees".

The electricity is always "browning out". In our section of town, people wanted to get a public phone booth. The authorities agreed. But each house from our section had to pay 300 Ks to the authorities. Later, I heard that a rich man from our section who is living in Rangoon had donated enough money for the phone booth. So I guess the authorities just kept all our money, but nobody dared to ask.

They ordered us to decorate and rebuild our houses, every year after rainy season. This year, the order said we also have to build a wall in front of the house, and if we don't we'll be driven out of our houses and forced to stay somewhere else. They only want to see good and beautiful houses, especially along the main roads and streets. So I had to buy galvanised sheets [*for the roof*], bricks, and cement from the black market. [*Construction materials at the black market are at least three times*

as expensive as those bought on the SLORC market (contrary to international myth, there is no free market in Burma), but buying materials on the SLORC market requires official approval, which requires significant bribes and much longer than it takes for the army to kick you out of your house.] In 1990, about 50 families were forced to resettle from the poor part of town. They were driven out, and then those families had to buy a new piece of land by giving 5,000 Ks each to the authorities. The authorities destroyed their old houses, then sold all land to the rich. After the Bogale Crisis, SLORC made a plan to combine all the villages into huge villages with about 1,000 families. But now I hear nothing more about it, maybe because it would affect rice production [*the Delta is a major rice-producing area*]. In 1991 many villages from Bogale, Ngaputaw and Moulmeingyun townships were forced to move, but now I hear they are allowed to go back again.

Members of USDA have to give their monthly membership fees, but I don't know how much. [*Union Solidarity and Development Association, SLORC's attempt to create a mass support organisation by means of coercion, began in late 1993/early 1994; civil servants must join or lose their jobs, many students must join or be expelled, and in some areas farmers must join or lose their land.*] USDA can be considered as a wing of the army. They train their members to be paratroopers, even the girls.

Things are getting worse. Corruption is everywhere, from buying a ticket for a steamer to the judicial system. Law enforcement is ineffective. Five months ago, a Japanese tourist's bag was stolen right on the jetty where there was a heavy presence of security forces. He was travelling alone and he lost all his money, so the school teachers collected money and gave him enough to get back to Rangoon. Then the Japanese looked at the money and he cried, right there. The police knew who stole his bag, but they didn't do anything.

Interview: 135-HRV: Execution, Torture, Livelihood, Forced Labour, Slavery

[*Following account of the current situation in Myawaddy-Kawkareik area was given by a 50-year-old Buddhist Karen officer in the KNLA during an interview on 15 July 1995.*]

Source: KHRG

Pa Er was killed by SLORC soldiers on 22 June. He was a 30-year-old Karen Buddhist. It happened in Naung Kaing village, Kawkareik Township (*just east of Kawkareik Town*). He was a farmer, married with three children. He was killed by Major Aye Than Maung and soldiers from Column 2 of IB 230. Their camp is at Thee Ho Taw in Kawkareik Township. The soldiers found Pa Er while they were searching for our units in the forest. He was there picking dogfruit. They asked him about us but he didn't know anything, so they tortured him to death. He was tortured

terribly. We saw his body — his mouth had been cut open, his ears had been cut off and his face was sliced up. The porters and villagers in the area saw them doing it. They saw the soldiers beating him severely. It was at Htee K'Saw Meh, between Than Bya and Naung Kaing. They also caught another 46-year-old villager, together with Pa Er. They accused him of being a KNLA soldier as well. And they beat him severely until his left arm was broken in two places. Now he is still in the village. There were many witnesses who saw them kill Pa Er. Both men were accused of having contact with KNU (*Karen National Union*). Sometimes we stay in Naung Kaing, but they were not KNU members. Pa Er was just captured in the forest, that's why they accused him. He gave them his village head's name and told them the village head would vouch that he was only a villager. But as they saw him in the forest, they accused him of being an "insurgent".

The same day they arrested a woman and accused her of having contact with us. She is also from Naung Kaing, and she is over 50 years old. SLORC said her husband was one of our members. Actually they are just ordinary villagers. They saw her outside her village and she told them she was a villager. They asked her about our movements but she said she didn't know anything because she had not gone anywhere. They accused her of taking rice to Karen soldiers because she was wearing a big towel on her head. Then they tied the towel over her face and kicked her to the ground. And then two or three soldiers walked and jumped on her body and threw water on the towel so she couldn't breathe. But they didn't get any information from her as she did not know anything about us. Because of this, the villagers are always afraid and living in the state terror. SLORC always demands that people report anything they know about KNLA, and if they do not give information they are punished. Since the Ko Per Baw have also been controlling and watching, the villagers are left with no choice (*but to tell*). It is difficult for us.

I know Ko Per Baw. They are the worst. They think they are doing good things, but actually they are torturing our people and they just do not see this. Most of them used to be villagers so they know about our operations and they inform SLORC, pushing our messengers and others who help us in danger. When the SLORC soldiers get the names, they arrest the people. There was one KNU village head, I don't want to give his name. When Ko Per Baw announced that all KNU members had to report to them, he did so. Ko Per Baw checked his name against a list given to them by SLORC and then they captured him. He was tortured until he gave information. That was last month.

Ko Per Baw leader in the area is U B'Nya Tha Meet. He calls himself Captain B'Nya Tha Meet. His assistant is "Captain" Kyaw Kyaw, who can't speak or read Burmese and has no education. Therefore, it is a problem that he got an officer's rank. B'Nya Tha Meet was a monk before, now he is a soldier. Ko Per Baw leader in Htoo Kaw Ko village is Maung Soe (*Maung Soe led the armed kidnapping of Podo Mahn Yin Sein from Beh Klaw refugee camp in Thailand in February, and later wrote a death threat against Mahn Yin Sein's nephew, who escaped the*

U *kidnapping*). Before, Maung Soe was in the KNLA. He was married, but he ran off with another woman, who was also already married, and then married her, and then he married again to a third woman. We arrested him and jailed him, so he was a convict. He had also done many other bad things, including killing people. But the (KNU) judge who heard his case had mercy on him and only jailed him. He was released in the course of the last battles (*for Manerplaw*). Then he went and became a holy man (*religious layman*). He reunited with his first wife — I don't know about the other two. He was wearing robes, building a pagoda and living together with his wife. When Ko Per Baw reached his area, he joined and received a pistol and a uniform with two stars (*Lieutenant*). Then he gave a list of names of all our messengers and members that he knew. Those people had all their property confiscated by SLORC, including their fields, cattle, and their rice supplies. Quite a lot of families suffered. They left their villages and went to 6th Brigade area [*the new headquarters area to the south, later under attack*]. They didn't dare stay.

D There are not many Ko Per Baw in Naung Kaing, maybe 10, but there are hundreds of SLORC soldiers. We estimate that the total number of Ko Per Baw is only 300-500, because they are very thinly spread. Their arms are the same as ours but they have little ammunition, not enough for even a single battle, and I don't think SLORC will provide them any more. We know that SLORC have no faith in Ko Per Baw and don't let them enter their (SLORC) camps. They stay separately, with Ko Per Baw only operating in the midst of SLORC units. So Ko Per Baw are surrounded, and therefore they think that they are safe and well-guarded — but they can't see the SLORC's plan.

R SLORC gives supplies to Ko Per Baw. Ko Per Baw announced that they would not take money from villages, but now they do. SLORC is not giving money for their salaries so they say the villagers must give the money. They demand a lot. If they control a village, they collect the money on a monthly basis, but it is usually not enough for them. So their soldiers go to the villages where they don't stay, and collect money "in advance". But if they come again and again, they demand it again and again (*several times every month*). Now they are establishing a "Justice Department" and are reopening and retrying all cases previously handled by KNU, and they have announced that KNU decisions are all illegitimate. Their "judges" are illiterate and will usually accept the argument of the first person to come to them about a case, so the man who speaks first and most in court will be successful. They decide theft cases, civil disputes, etc. Usually they just reverse KNU decisions. The truth is that it is just a business, a way to get money.

H Now they've said that in coming year they won't allow villagers to keep or kill domestic animals, and that everyone must become vegetarian. We thought Ko Per Baw were vegetarians, but some eat meat. For example, the leader of Ko Per Baw in Htee Law Thee village is Thay Klaw. He was a villager before and was known as a strict vegetarian, but then he went to Myaing Gyi Ngu (*DKBA headquarters*) and came back as a Company Captain on 8 June. People went to prepare vegetable

curries on his return, but he told them to add some meat. They asked, "Can you eat meat?", and he explained that he can't eat "living things", only meat. Then he told them to catch two chickens and his soldiers cooked them. Then he announced that the chicken's inner organs must be thrown away because these are the "living parts", that he and his men would eat only the flesh and that this would be the equivalent of vegetarianism! I don't understand how this is so, and I don't understand their ideology and their ways. Most of their members previously had criminal records and are liars. For example, Po Yaw, he is a useless man with debts in Mae Sot (*Thailand*), Thingan Nyi Naung and Kawkareik. He is a liar and a gambler. He drank alcohol and played cards all day. He is surrounded by debts and his wife has refused to stay with him. As he is afraid of her, he joined Ko Per Baw. Then I heard he has become a holy man and does nothing bad. But I don't know how long that will last for.

In Naung Kaing every family must pay 25 Ks per month to IB 230. There are also many "emergency" porter fees that are quite expensive: 500 or 600 or sometimes up to 1,000 Ks per person (*SLORC calls people whenever they need them, and the only way to get out of it is to pay — often they will deliberately call several times the number they need in order to get both porters and money*). The villagers must also pay money to another group, Tha Ka Sa Pa (*the "anti-Insurgent Group", a special group under the army*). Moreover, each family had to pay two baskets of rice every year plus a lot of money. But I forget how much. Tha Ka Sa Pa has about 15 men at Mya B'Dine. But there are a lot at other villages further inside Burma. They are Burmese and under the control of SLORC officers. Also, the "People's Army" (*a SLORC militia*) demands 15 Ks per month per family. They don't demand as much because they get money from setting up checkpoints on the car roads. So now the villagers suffer a lot. Years ago, few groups demanded anything from them, but now there are many — SLORC, Ko Per Baw, Tha Ka Sa Pa, People's Army, and also us. They face a big burden. They hoped Ko Per Baw would be their salvation. Actually Ko Per Baw demands the most, and now they have also started to demand porters because they can't carry all their possessions. They don't beat the porters, but SLORC is infamous for this.

Last month I saw two of their porters dead. I saw the bodies on 13 June. We looked and buried the corpse. I couldn't guess their age because the corpse was bloated and rotting. I could only see a longyi (*sarong*). That is a very harsh route, their loads are very heavy and they are not given enough rice. Some porters escaped in groups of three or four and told us that many were beaten. Most of them were Burmans, some of them from towns very far away. I asked them, "But you're the same race (*as the soldiers*), why do they do this to you?" And they said the soldiers didn't care. I pitied them. At first some of them were afraid, but later we spoke normally and I said, "I don't have any money to give you for your trip to get back home, but I can feed you and give you some rice to take." We gave them rice, chillies and fish-paste.

In May, villagers living north of Myawaddy saw more weapons like the ones used

at Wan Kha (*Kawmoora*) being transported into the area. They brought three more artillery pieces, but I don't know why. Because we have no more bases there. They were very big, with a barrel diameter of about one foot — to be mounted like mortars, but much bigger than the 120 mm's that the villagers had seen before. Six people were needed just to lift one barrel. [*Something like 200 — 300 mm siege mortars with delayed-action shells were used to destroy the bunkers at Kawmoora. They have relatively short range but the explosion is devastating. It is hard to guess why SLORC needs more in the area now, unless it is a show of strength to scare Thailand.*] Also, three days ago many reinforcements arrived at Paw Pa Hta (*about 100 km, further north, on the border with Thailand*). And I heard that two new supply battalions arrived in Kawkareik in the last few days. Normally, whenever there was more fighting, there was not much activity in rainy season. But this year there is. LID 88 is operating in our area. They have been forcing the villagers to build new camps and roads, including the Kawkareik-Nubu road. In the dry season, men, women and children must work — nearly entire villagers must go. There is also a place near Nubu where SLORC is now making rubber plantations. The villagers had to work there too — clearing ground, which is quite hard. Also, especially in the area controlled by IBs 355 and 356, many people's fields have been taken, maybe thousands of acres. The owners are not allowed to work on them now, instead other villagers are forced to work on them [*growing crops for sale or consumption by the army*]. The owners are from Baw Law and Kway Shan villages [*north of Thingan Nyi Naung*]. The people working there are not paid. In Kawkareik, there are three battalions — IBs 97, 230 and 231 — for security (*as opposed to supply battalions*) of the area. IBs 355, 356 and 357 are in Myawaddy. Now they plan to put another into Kawkareik at Kyaun K'Lay village and also another one at Myawaddy, so that will make eight regular battalions in two townships. I believe that a lot of people will go to Thailand (*as refugees*) soon. They are trying to block the border. But the villagers will try to come because they have to face too many difficulties if they remain in Burma and because I really don't think the SLORC operation is over yet.

Interview: 136-HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Detention, Torture, Refugee

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 Ethnicity: Mon
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 Interviewed: In the first week of May 1995
 Source: HURFOM

Recently, I was tortured many times by the SLORC troops, and I would like to tell